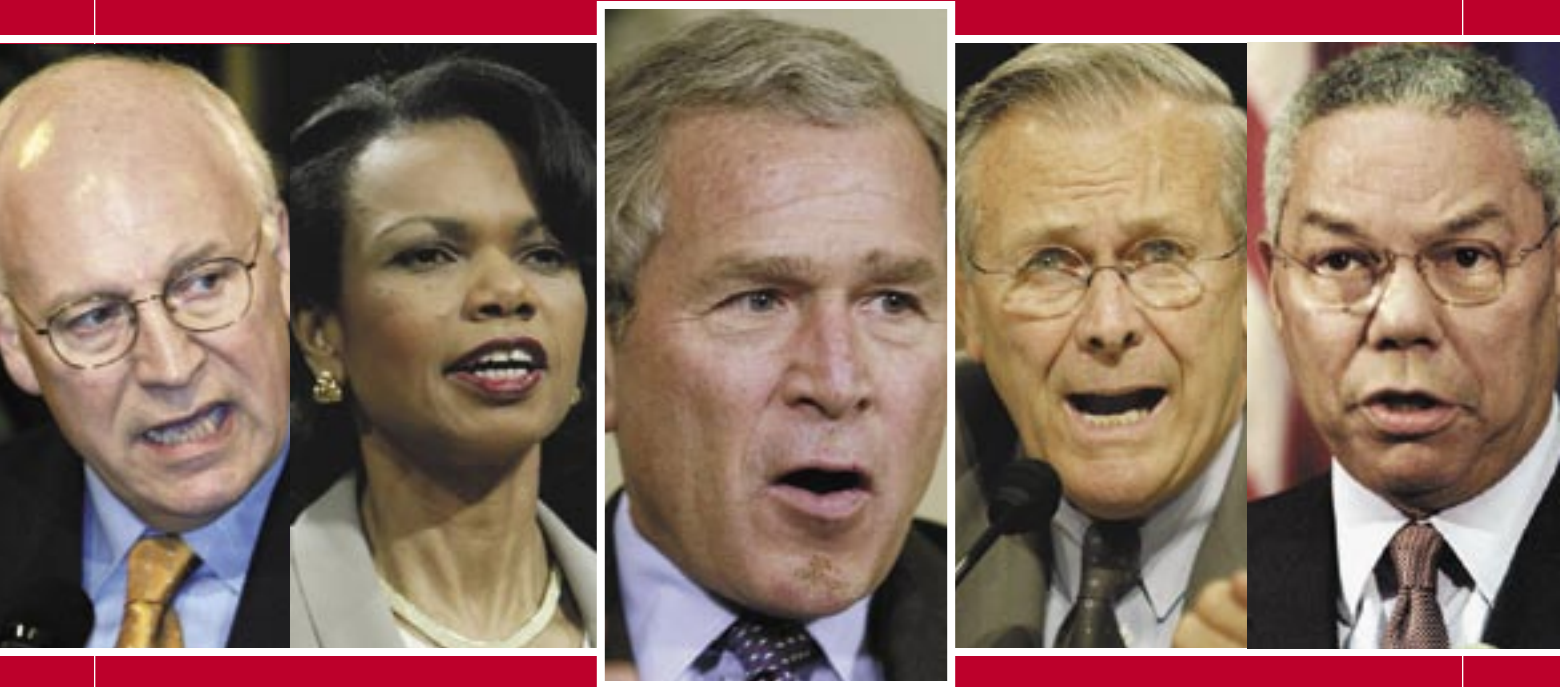


AUGUST 30, 2004

CHRISTOPHER HAYES ON
THE RISING PROGRESSIVE TIDE

IN THESE TIMES



They Knew...

... Iraq posed no nuclear threat

... Saddam and bin Laden were not collaborating

... There were no chemical or biological weapons

... They were misleading America

David Sirota & Christy Harvey report

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"We do not have any direct evidence that Iraq has used the period since Desert Fox to reconstitute its weapons of mass destruction programs."

CIA, February 2001

"The Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

George W. Bush, March 17, 2003

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If you want to find where America still exists, check out the people who check out your books.

“This is not just about winning an election. It’s about preserving the principles on which this very nation was founded.”

THE REV. AL SHARPTON, ADDRESSING THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION, JULY 28

Editorial

THE ALL-IMPORTANT SWING VOTER

TERRY LABAN

LABAN@ITC 04



Silence of the Dems By Joel Bleifuss

The words from the podium were inspiring. Ron Reagan urged voters to chose “between reason and ignorance, between true compassion

and mere ideology.” Teresa Heinz Kerry asked Americans to summon “the better angels of our nature.”

Democratic Convention speakers gave voice to the historic choice that is before us in November, but not a word was said about the biggest obstacle standing in the way of our aspiration “to build one America”: multinational corporations that owe allegiance only to the bottom line. Even John Edwards, who made a career of battling corporate lawyers, did not use the word “corporation” once in his speech.

The Democratic National Committee issued a prohibition against Bush-bashing. No such edict is needed when it comes to corporations. You don’t bite the hand that fills your wallet.

A 34-year-old Bill Clinton, the populist governor of Arkansas who battled Arkansas Power and Light Co. and other corporate interests, learned that lesson. In 1980 he lost his reelection bid to Frank White, an investment banker backed by Arkansas’ corporate establishment and a then-impressive \$400,000 war chest. Michael Kelly noted in the *New York Times Magazine* that the message Clinton gleaned was clear: “To be successful, a politician had to appear hugely concerned with bettering the lives of ordinary citizens

but had to be careful to avoid acting on those concerns so aggressively that they threatened the interests of the business elite.”

Indeed, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, in this current election cycle corporate interests have contributed \$356 million, or 70 percent, of the \$511 million in campaign donations Democrats have collected so far.

That money bought silence. Imagine what might have been said at the podium if the Democrats did not have to worry about their masters’ whips. Perhaps some prime-time speaker might have called for much-needed reform of the campaign finance system.

Corporations are the dominant form of economic organization in our world. That is not going to change. However, their basest excesses can be corralled through legislation and trade agreements.

Captains of industry created corporations, in part, to shield themselves from financial liability. And in the mid-1800s, U.S. corporations gained human powers through a judicial system that imbued these bloodless entities with the constitutional rights of flesh-and-blood individuals.

But we allow corporations to do things that we would never allow a person to do. *The Corporation*, a documentary now in

theaters, examines corporations as legal “persons.” Applying the standard diagnostic criteria of psychologists, the filmmakers conclude that corporations are psychopathic personalities.

The documentary makes the case that the corporation’s operating principles give it a highly anti-social “personality”: It is self-interested, inherently amoral, callous and deceitful; it breaches social and legal standards to get its way; it does not suffer from guilt. In other words, it is evil.

The corporation is not a “person” that you want wielding the gross power it currently holds over you and your community. From the dangers to the earth’s future posed by global warming, to a healthcare system that denies coverage to those who can’t afford it, to an economic system that encourages CEOs to shift production to countries with no labor laws—the list of social ills that result from undue corporate influence on the political process is endless.

Yes, the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, but that freedom is curtailed when the power of money silences our political leaders from speaking out. And no, we can’t look to the corporate media to provide the needed critique.

We the people, especially those of us in independent media, need to work to change the paradigm, to challenge the hegemony of corporations.

Listen to the rallying cry from Boston, but hear the silence surrounding it—the evil that dare not say its name. ■



Simple Formulae

In reply to two letters in your July 19 issue, it shocks me that there are still people calling themselves "progressive" who insist that the way to reform politics is to target the two-party system ("All for One" and "One Stupid White Man"). How could anyone be that blind after living through these last three and a half years?

Progressives everywhere need to put down their political theory tracts and think about some simple formulae:

- 1) Votes that are not for Kerry = votes for Bush;
- 2) Votes for Bush = conservative Supreme Court for next 10 to 20 years;
- 3) Conservative Supreme Court for next 10 to 20 years

= Death of progressive politics in America.

If you like the idea of a newly appointed Chief Justice Antonin Scalia running roughshod over the Constitution, by all means vote for Ralph Nader. Hopefully you're not black or gay or female, so can sit in your ivory tower somewhere while the rest of us suffer the devastating loss of civil rights that your irresponsible ignorance will bring.

Mary Clark
New York, N.Y.

GOP SOB's

I just read Annette Fuentes' thoughtful article on patriotism and nationalism post 9/11, and I was struck by her

comments on the war on the middle class being waged by the GOP (Greedy Old Plutocrats) and the comparisons to Germany in the early 1930s before the rise of Hitler ("Whose Homeland is This?" July 19). In order for democracy to succeed we must have a strong middle class. The anti-democratic bent of the Republican Party has been obvious to me for years, and I am pleased to see others are noticing it too. We must stop these anti-America SOB's (Stodgy Old Businessmen). The canonizing of that evil actor Ronald Reagan was typical. Under him, the war against the middle class was stratified and intensified, and I picture that geezer in hell with demons torturing him while speaking in Spanish to honor those Latin American citizens murdered with U.S. weapons and ammunition supplied by him and Bush I. Keep up the excellent work. I only hope enough people will hear and learn the truth before it is too late.

Thomas R. Arnold
Richlandtown, Penn.

One Veteran's Voice

Our troops have been made indentured servants to the Bush administration's election efforts.

Our troops are our children, grandchildren, even great-grandchildren, our shipmates,

many dead, many permanently handicapped by an administration treating them with contempt. The Supreme Court-appointed triumvirate of Cheney, Rove and Bush, zealously augmented by corporate chickenhawks, have put us into an unending war, alienated the rest of the world, created an ever-increasing, and justified, terrorist opposition. We the people have learned that they are untrustworthy, lacking in common sense, lying, exaggerating and endlessly propagandizing. They tell us with incredible chutzpah that we must stay the course, not changing horses in midstream, when they put us in the stream to begin with.

WAIT! There's more. They are deliberately and willfully acting to destroy Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public education, citizen's privacy and rights. They have spent hundreds of billions of dollars on empire conquest, much of it coming from Social Security tax money intended for the trust fund, and the national debt is now estimated to be in excess of \$31,000 per American family. If they remain in control, our children and grandchildren will have no Social Security, no medical care or hope to rise to the middle class, indeed even to remain in it. Now we urgently need jobs, healthcare, schools and aid to higher education to stem the loss of American jobs going to better-educated foreign nationals; improvements to our roads, bridges, tunnels, indeed our entire infrastructure. Instead of doing these things, this administration destroys other countries and then spends our billions to rebuild them,

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DISCUSSION

Screw protests! They are a waste of time and energy that could be used in REAL opposition efforts. All that gets accomplished is a big picnic with a bunch of bad hand-painted signs that no one can even read. It's a pep rally with no game. Protests don't effect political action. They just make the protesters feel better about themselves.

"Mister president! We have a serious situation! A bunch of idiots are out in the August sun with effigies of you painted on their underwear! They've succeeded in memorizing a slogan, and they're CHANTING it!"

"We may as well admit defeat, Dick. HOW can we possibly execute our diabolical schemes now? It's been nice working with you."

While you're rehearsing your little follies or painting your underwear, electronic voting machines are being installed to take you out of the equation altogether. Then you can burn to a crisp in the August sun and sing "We Shall Overcome" until you're blue in the face. The tanks and the toxins and the tax cuts for the rich will be rolling along smoothly.

Join the online debate at "Protesting Too Little."

enriching favored corporations that pay employees many times more than Americans would earn doing needed jobs here in America.

This administration talks the talk, but doesn't walk the walk. There's nothing compassionate or conservative about it. I don't understand how a single thinking Christian American could possibly vote to retain this administration. Look how Bush has violated many of the Ten Commandments, blatantly ignored Christ's teachings. He has intimidated our CIA to give him what he wants to justify his foreign adventures. The prime examples here are his administration's vengeful outing of a CIA operative to punish her husband for not fabricating support for his anti-Saddam propaganda about WMDs and the firing of the CIA director as fall guy for his administration's ineptitude and conspiracy.

Bush has exposed himself as a strutting bantam rooster, featherless, naked as a jaybird, lacking in the common sense and judgment we the people demand in our nation's leader. His impulsiveness and inability to plan or foresee consequences of his lack of planning make him a danger to the American people.

Douglas S. Murray
(Veteran of three wars)
Virginia Beach, Va.

election 2004 coverage

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The Ex Factor

Prison-reform groups work to educate former felons on their voting rights. By Dan Frosch

THE RED-FACED MAN SLOWS HIS SHOPPING CART of empty beer cans and stares in disbelief at the white form just thrust into his hand.

"I can't," he mutters, shaking a head of unkempt, yellowish hair. "They told me I can't."

Caylor Roling, a tall, bespectacled young woman, who chased down her new friend through a crowded Food 4 Less parking lot, shakes her head back.

"That's not true," she almost shouts. "In Oregon, even if you have a past felony conviction, you can!"

Roling—an organizer with the Western Prison Project (WPP), a prison reform group in the midst of a voter registration drive aimed at convicted felons—smiles as the man trots away, curiously eyeing the registration form she's handed him.

Since the 2000 election, a wellspring of attention has focused on felony disenfranchisement. Currently, nearly 4 million Americans cannot vote because

they're incarcerated or live in a state that strips felons of their voting rights even after they've been released, according to The Sentencing Project, a Washington D.C.-based prison reform organization.

But what of the millions of felons in the United States who can vote? Aside from Maine, Vermont and the District of Columbia, which allow all residents to vote even if they're locked up, 34 states let felons go to the polls at some point after their release. According to experts, however, the majority of these ex-felons probably don't, thanks to complex suffrage laws that differ by state, coupled with a dearth of information about those laws.

In New York, for example, parolees can't vote but those on probation can; in Oregon anyone can vote once they're out of prison; and in Washington, only ex-felons convicted after 1984 can vote, and they have to complete parole, probation and pay any outstanding fines first.

Ex-felons oftentimes have no idea that they've been re-enfranchised, and when they do try and vote, clueless election officials in some cases have refused to let them.

This election year, no one's taking any chances. Prison reform groups like WPP, along with voting rights organizations, are working in unprecedented numbers across the country to educate and register ex-felons and to ensure that election officials get it right. Particularly in swing states like Oregon that grant unconditional suffrage to ex-felons—Al Gore squeezed out a victory here by just 6,700 votes in 2000—the effort conceivably could impact the election.

Christopher Uggen, a sociologist at the University of Minnesota, says there are probably close to 9 million ex-felons in the United States. "Many are still unaware that their rights have been restored or are hesitant to vote because they would not like to risk being turned away at the polls," he told *In These Times*.

While it's difficult to predict the voting patterns of a population that hasn't yet flexed its political muscle, Uggen estimates that, based on sex, age, race, marital status and income, some 70 percent to 80 percent of all ex-felons (and felons) in the United States would vote Democratic. This is in large part because a tremendous percentage of those who are or have been incarcerated are black (See page 8, "Prison in the Cards"), 90 percent of African American voters cast their ballots for Gore in 2000.

WPP's campaign, called the VOICE Project, is focusing on Oregon, Montana, Utah and Nevada. Since 2002, organizers have been registering voters at halfway houses, canvassing areas identified as having a high percentage of ex-felons, and disseminating information through probation and parole officers—not to mention calling elections and corrections officials to make sure they don't screw it all up.

In Oregon alone, WPP Executive Director Brigitte Sarabi says there are about 30,000 men and women on parole, probation or under some sort of post-release supervision, and thousands more with felony convictions, most of whom have no idea they can vote.

"Felons are always told what they can't do when they leave prison," says Cassandra Villanueva, an organizer for WPP and herself an ex-felon who was unaware of her rights until she contacted the group. "But they've never been told what they can do."

According to Jessie Allen, associate

counsel for the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law, often there's also "ignorance and stereotyping" on the part of election officials when ex-felons try to vote. In 2002, the Brennan Center discovered that during local elections in New York about half of the county election boards were asking ex-felons to present fictitious documents proving they'd completed their sentences. According to Allen, lawyers from Brennan met with state election officials in an effort to inform them of their own rules.

Two years later, Allen says she's concerned that some election officials in New York and elsewhere across the country are still in the dark.

"It's safe to say that many election officials still don't know the rules of the states where they work," Allen notes. "People are very confused right now."

Late last year, Connections, a Montana prison reform group that's participating in WPP's registration drive, sent surveys to 10 county election officials and 10 parole and probation officers, asking whether ex-felons in the state of Montana are allowed to vote.

The majority answered that ex-felons couldn't—a stupefying revelation, considering that for the past 34 years state law has granted suffrage to all convicted felons from the day they're released.

"They failed miserably," says Casey Rudd, Connections' executive director. According to Rudd, 385 ex-felons also were surveyed, and the overwhelming majority was convinced they'd lost their voting rights as well.

Disturbed by the results, Connections has met with local corrections officials, doled out information to those who'd botched their survey and dived headfirst into WPP's campaign.

On a recent trip to two transitional houses in Salem, Oregon, in the shadows of the state's capital building, Villanueva and Roling registered six young women fresh out of prison or drug treatment centers in a matter of minutes. One, 27-year-old Misty Frank on probation from a felony narcotics possession charge, had never registered before. She was both shocked and enthused that she could.

Says Sarabi: "Once you've taken their rights away, it's amazing how many ex-felons want to exercise them." ■

DAN FROSCH, an award-winning journalist, writes on criminal justice issues and the courts for *In These Times*.

Florida: The Next Florida?

Florida has not been doing enough to help felons get their civil rights restored after being released from prison, the Tallahassee Court of Appeals ruled unanimously on July 15.

Florida is among only 12 states that deny felons the right to vote even after they are released from prison; those rights, however, can be restored through a hearing before the Florida Clemency Board. The Court decided that, upon release, inmates must be aided in filling out applications to regain voting rights.

The ruling was applauded by local elections officials, civil libertarians and even Gov. Jeb Bush—who expressed eagerness to comply with federal elections standards this year. But Howard Simon, executive director of the Florida ACLU, insisted on being a party-pooper: "At what point is the governor going to say that this is a cost that's just not worth it?" he asked.

About a week later, it turns out.

On July 23, Bush's office announced that it would discontinue using the form, citing the "strain on personnel resources" that the high volume of paperwork would create. The governor's office argues that the form is unnecessary, because as inmates leave prison a digital application for a re-enfranchisement hearing is made on their behalf. The Clemency Board will review individuals' electronic applications and will notify each one as to whether he or she may get back their voting rights. Soon.

Critics might balk at this solution, given that "computer glitches" in voter rolls aren't new in Florida. Just a week before the court's recent decision, local elections officials were ordered to scrap a faulty state-issued database of 48,000 disenfranchised individuals that was created to correct a previous set of faulty voter rolls in accordance with a federal ruling. Citizens who had never been convicted raised questions when they were notified that their voting rights had been revoked.

"Why don't we simply get rid of this Civil War era Jim Crow law?" says Leon Country Supervisor of Elections Ion Sancho.

—Alix Rule

Prison in the Cards

Many black men face a rough new rite of passage. *By Silja J.A. Talvi*

ACCORDING TO TWO recent research studies, the path that awaits young, undereducated African-American men is more likely to lead them to prison than anywhere else.

In fact, with the expansion of the nation's sprawling prison industrial complex since the 1980s, things have gotten far, far worse for black men everywhere.

Consider that in 1954—the year that the Supreme Court weighed in favor of desegregation with their *Brown v. Board of Education* decision—an estimated 98,000 African-Americans sat behind bars. Today, that figure stands at 884,500, or

nine times the number of black men and women incarcerated at the advent of the Civil Rights movement.

Given current trends, one of every three African-American men born today can expect to go to prison in his lifetime. According to the authors of The Sentencing Project's recent report, "Schools and Prisons: Fifty Years After *Brown v. Board of Education*," the situation is largely attributable to the War on Drugs, particularly the grossly disparate crack and powder cocaine federal sentencing guidelines. Despite a U.S. Sentencing Commission recommendation to fully eliminate

such sentencing differentials, these guidelines have been supported by both the Clinton and Bush administrations.

Imprisonment is now so common for young men of color that it serves as a veritable rite of passage. And no community has been as badly impacted as African-American inner city neighborhoods, leading to a phenomenon that many sociologists have begun to call the "mass incarceration" of young, low-income black men.

"American society loses the contribution of those men going to prison, in their roles as parents, workers, and citizens," says Professor Bruce Western,

professor of sociology at Princeton University.

Along with University of Washington sociology professor Becky Pettit, Western recently co-authored an extensive research study, "Mass Imprisonment and the Life Course: Race and Class Inequality in U.S. Incarceration," which was first published in the *American Sociological Review*. Their study, conducted over a period of several years, demonstrates conclusively that African-American men are now more likely to end up in prison than to earn a bachelor's degree or even serve in the military.

"I think the findings also indicate an institutional failure," says Western. "The idea of universal rights of citizenship, social membership, is a central part of American political culture, yet mass incarceration has systematically limited the full

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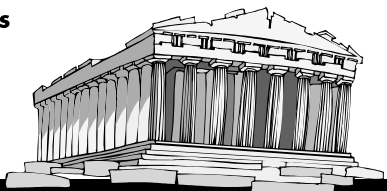
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The future of the young black man?

participation of low-education black men in American society. Democracy and civil society are diminished and that is a collective loss."

Pettit and Western's dramatic findings further demonstrate that fully 60 percent of African-American male high-school dropouts born between 1965 and 1969 ended up doing time in prison by 1999.

These statistics cannot simply be reduced to notions of overt or subtle racial prejudice in arrest, sentencing and incarceration rates, says Western. Access to opportunities plays a key role.

In fact, when Pettit and Western analyzed Census 2000 data, they found that while racial inequalities in imprisonment rates continued at exactly the same exorbitant rate, class and education inequality had become the more significant marker of the American mass incarceration trend. Based on Pettit and Western's analysis, the lifetime risks of imprisonment for all men roughly doubled from 1979 to 1999, but nearly all of this increased risk was experienced by those who never make it to college.

"Virtually the whole burden of the prison boom has fallen on those with just a high school education," Western notes.

The Bush Administration has taken a do-nothing approach to the fact that the imprisonment

of underprivileged African-Americans has reached epidemic proportions.

On July 23, President Bush stood before the Urban League's National Convention in Detroit and lauded the diversion of additional funding to federal prosecutors, before asserting that "progress for African-Americans ... depends on safe streets."

The only mention of prisoners during the President's speech related to the fate of the more than 600,000 men and women who are released from prison each year. "Let's make sure we're the country of the second chance," President Bush told the crowd, without mentioning how his administration would rectify the federally-instituted denial of student loans, public housing, or welfare to any person convicted of a drug crime. (Most states still have such bans in effect, although some legislatures have taken minimal steps to ease the plight of ex-offenders.)

The White House spin, in this regard, seems to be working. Even in this crowd of seasoned civil rights supporters, President Bush's comments were met with a strong round of applause. ■

SILJA J.A. TALVI is a Seattle-based journalist and eight-time winner of regional Society of Professional Journalists awards.

APPALL-O-METER

0.3 Recovery With Class

"Jason, if you wake up and you live, I'll buy you a Corvette." With these magical words, reports the *Boston Globe*, a heartsick father summoned his son away from death's door. It is not known how decisive the promise of a bitching ride was in clinching Jason Stackiewicz's startling recovery from severe brain injuries. But his father, Thomas, owner of three Corvettes, vows to make good his promise to the young man, who was injured in February while celebrating the victory of his team in the Super Bowl.



Almasi, who, oddly enough, turns out to be white. As Joshua Holland reveals on Gadflyer.com, the group's representative was to appear on C-SPAN to rebut charges by NAACP President Kwesi Mfume that Project 21 and other such outfits were "make-believe black organizations."

"Um ... Project 21 ... a program for conservative African-Americans," stammered host Robb Harlston, gobsmacked by this ironic situation. "You're not African-American."

Apparently good black help is hard to find in the world of conservative think tanks.

Project 21, Holland reports, is a subsidiary of the National Center for Public Policy Research, an organization founded in the 1980s to support President Ronald Reagan's policies in Latin America and that, since then, has developed a number of policy hobbyhorses reflecting the interests of the oil and tobacco companies that fund it.

2.5 The Greatest of These is Charity

Could it be that the Republicans rule this country because they spare no effort to help the least of their brethren? Consider this compelling act of charity: Campaign workers for Ralph Nader needed to collect 30,000 petition signatures to get their man on Michigan's November ballot. They collected barely 5,400. They were gratified to learn, however, that the state's Republicans had taken the trouble to collect more than 40,000 signatures for their man, according to ABC. Now that's love.

2.5 The Ol' Whiteface Act

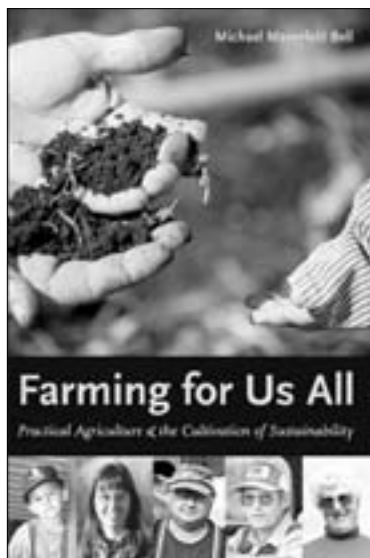
A funny thing happened when the spokesperson for Project 21, a leading organization of black conservatives, got a flat tire on the way to a C-SPAN interview. The group had to send its director, David

2.0 Time To Buy Bigger Pants, America

Looking for a more efficient delivery system for the sugary pap the Krispy Kreme Corp. fashions into doughnuts? Breathe easy. CNN reports that the company has transformed its celebrated glazed treat into frozen drink form. "We feel our expanded beverage offerings will provide tremendous growth opportunity for both the company and the Krispy Kreme brand," explained President and CEO Scott Livengood.

—Dave Mulcahey

sustainability



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Michael Mayerfeld Bell

*Published in association with the Rural
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Freedom Reborn

Youth activists learn techniques for anti-racism, voter registration **By Maya Schenwar**

FORTY YEARS AFTER MISSISSIPPI Freedom Summer, poll taxes, literacy tests and Jim Crow laws are history—but not the electoral system that disenfranchised many voters.

To change that, organizers of a new generation of Freedom Schools are spearheading a massive voter registration campaign and mobilizing youth activists across the country.

"In the original Freedom Schools, it was mostly young people organizing to get adults the vote," says David Billings, an organizer with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISB), one of the organizations sponsoring Freedom Schools this summer. "Right now, we're trying to direct the political energy and enthusiasm in the youth culture toward voter registration, to bring together a youth politic which is larger and more varied than the one that existed in 1964."

The percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who vote has fallen from 42 percent to 28 percent since 1972, when the voting age was lowered to 18. Freedom School activists with PISB and the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) hope to make this year the one that breaks the trend.

There are 71 Freedom Schools, including 64 sponsored by CDF, in operation, training young people to register voters and build anti-racist political movements within their communities. Three new

schools were established this summer. All are free and draw participants mostly from historically disenfranchised groups like African Americans and Latinos.

Students at the Manhattan Freedom School, which opened July 6, are working in conjunction with college-age volunteers, called Freedom Crews, to register 15,000 New Yorkers by September, says CDF Deputy Director Sandy Trujillo.

"These kids go out every day to knock on doors and talk to people on the streets," says Trujillo. "We recognize that this year is particularly important for a voter registration campaign."

The New Orleans PISB Freedom School kicked off a similar registration drive in July.

Besides promoting direct action, organizers from both PISB and CDF Freedom Schools work to educate students about the history and politics of anti-racist work in the United States. Students are encouraged to examine the specific needs of their communities.

"The purpose is to have the youth experience an educational setting and curriculum they're not receiving in their school situation," Billings says, "a curriculum that talks about race and power and the importance of organizing." ■

For more information, visit www.thepeoplesinstitute.org or www.childrensdefense.org.

Kisses Kept Quiet **By Alix Rule**

The U.S. District Court in Kansas blocked enforcement in late July of the state's Kiss and Tell Law, which requires doctors, psychologists and counselors to report all sexual activity involving youths 16 and younger as child abuse.

Kansas Attorney General Phil Kline issued this interpretation of the state's child-abuse reporting law last year, because, he argued, teen sex is "inherently injurious."

The nonprofit Center for Reproductive Rights challenged the AG's opinion, arguing that it violates adolescents' right to privacy and deters them from seeking healthcare or counseling. Judge J. Thomas Marten agreed that the interpretation was "a monumental change in policy" and ruled that it "could have large implications for the well-being of minors."

Studies show that fewer teens would seek medical attention if confidentiality weren't guaranteed. Forty-seven percent of sexually active teenage girls say that they would stop seeking reproductive health services if their parents were made aware, though most would continue having sex, a 2002 American Medical Association study found.

"There are a lot of teachable moments," says Mary O'Mara, director of Five Keys Charter School in San Francisco. Launched in September 2003, Five Keys is the first—and, at this point, only—charter school inside a prison. The school's name is used to remind students of the importance of education, employment, family, community and recovery.

Five Keys is designed to catch its students as they move through the system. Men and women age 18 and up take classes toward a high school diploma in two San Francisco County jails and one post-release site. The student-prisoners typically are in these locations for a short time—90 days on average—awaiting sentencing or release. "In our first 40 days we had 850 students, and only 62 were there for the entire 40 days," O'Mara says.

O'Mara, a former middle school and kindergarten teacher at private schools in affluent Marin County, was selected as the school's leader last year, when the San Francisco County Sheriff's Department was looking to start a charter school.

"Opening any charter school is a big undertaking, but this is even more so," she says. Still, she's hopeful that Five Keys' success will serve as a model for others. "We're working hard to create this so that it can be replicated."

Why develop an entire school and not just a math class or a writing class? Those have been done before and would seem, well, easier to do.

Basically the vision for this school is from Michael Hennessey, the sheriff. His vision was to have the students actually obtain a high school diploma, not have a smattering of educational classes, but actually to get inspired in jail to get a high school diploma as a tool to move forward. So that's the goal of the school, not just to provide literacy. We have a large range of abilities in our population, so we try to meet the needs of anyone [in the jails] who doesn't have a high school diploma.

How do you decide on a curriculum for such a varied student population?

We offer the core high school courses, and then we have [students'] transcripts, which help us select courses for the students in order for them to meet their academic goals.

We also have a literacy-based class, because we've identified about 26 students who read below fifth-grade level, so we have a learning specialist who chooses the curriculum and works with the instructor in that class. A couple of students don't read; they're illiterate. So we have the full range of students.

We have the same [academic] requirements as the San Francisco school district. As [our students] complete grades we add it to their transcript. And we have a post-release site so when they come out of jail they can go there and continue their education or go on to community college or another educational opportunity, depending on the student.

A School Behind Bars

By Brett Schaeffer

Some might say your students already had their chance to go to school like everyone else. Why give them second, third, fourth—and in some cases fifth and sixth—chances?

What's the alternative? The alternative is that they go back and repeat the same cycle of behavior. And they end up in the same place. So this is an opportunity for them. This is the time for them to make a difference.

And a lot of these students were dropouts. The school system did not serve them. A lot of our students have learning issues that were never diagnosed. A lot of them come from very difficult family situations, difficult neighborhoods, and weren't given the opportunities that other students have had.

So in some ways it's really society's responsibility, I feel, to try and meet the needs of these very important citizens—because they will come back out into your community, and my community.

Do we want them to come out educated and feeling good about themselves? Or do we want them to come out in the state that they came into jail? I think it's our best interest to try to give them an opportunity to change. ■



Mary O'Mara

BRETT SCHAEFFER
is a writer based in
Philadelphia.



Viewpoint *By Hans Johnson*

Ghosts of Hatred Haunt GOP

In a throwback to McCarthyism, the Bush-Cheney campaign is threatening to warp gay nuptials into weaponry for drawing Democratic blood.

ANGUISHED VOICES HAVE A WAY OF ECHOING beyond the grave. And at times in Washington the spirits of bygone politicians are suddenly recalled to life. Like ghosts in Dickens, such figures bear witness to the causes of their downfall in a tone that should make their mortal counterparts take heed.

So it is this summer as Republicans try to bludgeon Democrats with same-sex marriage. Bush's jibes against "activist judges" (just not the ones who took his side on vote counts from the Sunshine State), and GOP vows to stand in courthouse doors rather than admit committed couples, resurrect memories of the foes of civil rights like axe-wielding Georgia Governor Lester Maddox. Similarly, in a throwback to McCarthyism, the Bush-Cheney campaign is threatening to warp gay nuptials into weaponry for drawing Democratic blood.

This strategy brings to life the story of a little-known U.S. senator from Wyoming named Lester Hunt. His death 50 years ago speaks volumes about the sadism that lurks beneath appeals to family values.

Hunt, a Democrat elected in 1948, faced a tough fight to keep his seat in 1954. Republicans held only a one-vote majority in the Senate and saw the incumbent as a prime target. So avid were top GOP strategists to oust him that they fastened onto the arrest of his son. "Arrested, soliciting as a queer," noted New Hampshire Sen. Styles Bridges, chair of the GOP campaign committee, when informed of the arrest by inside sources at the Morals Division of the D.C. police.

Bridges and another Senate colleague pressured police to bind the younger Hunt over for a fast-track trial, threatening to lambaste police as obstructionists if they refused. What followed, according to historian Rick Ewig, was a fervent effort to shame the elder Hunt into resigning from the Senate and withdrawing from the race.

Like today's far-right fringe, these demagogues were mimicking a politics of fear they had seen a peer use to win office and attract a national following. Indeed, the attempt to oust Hunt was fueled by his criticism of Sen. Joe McCarthy, the loudest-roaring right-wing lion of his day. "If you tell a big enough lie and tell it often enough, someone is bound to believe it," Hunt told the *Wyoming Eagle* in 1952 in reference to McCarthy.

Hunt's son was found guilty and paid a small fine.

And Hunt himself at first appeared to bow to the GOP bullying, citing his own health as reason for leaving the race. But his resistance to vacating the seat stiffened amid counsel from friend and fellow Wyoming Democrat Sen. Joseph O'Mahoney.

In June 1954, just as a lazy summer was beginning in the capital, Hunt put an end to the jockeying. He took a shotgun under his coat to his Senate office and killed himself, leaving a letter to his son denying any tie between the arrest and the suicide and another letter asking a friend to help get his son a job.

This bloody episode bursts from the heart of David Johnson's riveting history of gay-baiting in the McCarthy era. In *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecu-*

tion of Gays and Lesbians, Johnson lays blame for Hunt's death at Bridges' feet. In his book he traces the shameful collaboration between government personnel officers and the D.C. vice squads that fueled inquisitions, investigations and systematic removals of gay people from federal agencies. As Johnson reports, it took 30 years to get the government out of the business of filtering, finding and firing gay people who were striving to serve their country through



public service.

Johnson's book bears out the importance that allies, such as the ACLU and later the American Psychological Association, had in helping lift the public stigma from gays. Today allied voices continue to guide, and in some cases lead, the debate over same-sex marriage.

Arizona Sen. John McCain put a finger in the eye of present-day Senate ringleader Rick Santorum (R-Penn.) when he called the Bush-backed plan to amend the Constitution "antithetical in every way to the core philosophy of Republicans." Far from the Capitol, others held a delighted wake for the doomed anti-gay proposal, which failed 48-50 on a cloture motion that needed 60 votes. "This is the sort of nonsense that Bush and his handlers continue to feed to their 'base,'" Floyd McKay wrote in the *Seattle Times*. "So my 47-year marriage is somehow diminished because a lesbian couple down the street gets a license like ours? Oh, please!"

With friends like these, gay people are increasingly seeing attacks on their basic humanity backfire on proponents. Though right-wing mullahs still scapegoat his kind, a present-day Lester Hunt might find a bit more breathing room. ■

HANS JOHNSON
writes on labor,
religion and politics
for *In These Times*.



Beyond Loopy

HAVING SPENT THE PAST FOUR YEARS CRISSCROSSING America to uncover the real state of the union under King George the W and his rabid band of Bushites, I have come to a disturbing conclusion: **THESE PEOPLE ARE NUTS!**

We're talking bullgoose-loopy, ideological freaks whose snorting rampages pose a threat to us all and to all we hold dear. It's not that they're a little to the right. No. They're insane—zealots dedicated to implementing their plutocratic, autocratic, antidemocratic, militaristic, and imperialistic vision of America (and the world)—and it's time we stopped beating around the bush about it.

Oh, I can hear you thinking, "Surely he doesn't mean 'loopy.'"

While the Bushites might be unusually robust, aggressive even, in the pursuit of their agenda, they are still within the bounds of America's mainstream political thought ... right? It's not like they're, you know, EXTREMISTS who would try to superimpose their own Orwellian, Strangelovian, AynRandian, Jerry Fallwellian ideology over America's good ol' egalitarian ideals ... right? I mean, these are rational people, right?

No. They're insane. And somebody's got to stand up once and for all to say what the rest of us are thinking.

How crazy are they? Consider these symptoms:

Rumsfeld—scowling, barking and thrusting out his chest—sees weapons of mass destruction that are not there;

George himself constantly hears voices in his head telling him to "cut rich people's taxes ... again;"

Ashcroft lunges from place to place, frenetically searching for more ways to "protect" our freedom by (follow the bouncing logic here) throttling our freedoms;

Cheney, with that fiendish grin always slashed across his face, insists that God created Earth so oil companies would have something to plunder.

These people must be stopped and taken away to a very quiet, soothing place where they can no longer do harm. Think about it. In four short years, they have:

- Heisted \$1.3 trillion from our public treasury and doled it out to their richest campaign backers.
- Defoliated our environmental protections.
- Launched a class war not only against the poor, but against the middle class as well.
- Taken a weedwhacker to our Bill of Rights.
- Sought to castrate labor unions.
- Turned a \$240 billion budget surplus into a \$520 billion debt.

- Attempted to privatize everything from the Park Service to Social Security.
- And hurled our nation into a maniacal, messianic, testosterone-driven global war to make the world safe for Halliburton.

Imagine what they'd be doing if they'd actually won the election! Now, imagine what they will be doing if they win this next one ... or if they Supreme-Court it again.

"Unbelievable" is usually a word reserved for breathtaking circus acts or the kind of astonishing oddities found in Ripley's Believe It or Not, but it has now become the defining term for the Madness of King George the W. As I've crisscrossed America since the Bushites took power, person after person has come forward—mouth agape, head shaking, eyes wide—with yet another horror story of the mind-boggling arrogance and downright weirdness of this bunch. And every one of their stories is punctuated with: "Unbelievable!"

Bush & Co. have made the bizarre commonplace. So common that whenever there's another White House announcement of some action they've either taken or proposed, people instinctively cringe: "Oh no, here it comes again." What "it" is doesn't matter, for people know it's going to be yet another awful step backward, yet another dollop of unfathomable ideological excess—and another wallop for the rest of us.

When I say "people" cringe, I don't merely mean yellow-dog Democrats—but also political switch-hitters, Libertarians, non-voters, none-of-the-abovers and—grab your stuffed elephant, George!—Republicans. Not only are lots of mainstream, moderate, Rockefeller Republicans appalled by Boy Bush's wacked-out, right-wing policies, but so are many Barry Goldwater conservatives. They don't think of the USA PATRIOT Act, profligate federal spending, unlimited war on whomever, the relentless assault on local sovereignty, the proliferation of executive secrecy, unfettered corporate welfare ... et cetera, et cetera, as being "conservative."

A middle-aged lady came up to me in a coffee shop this spring and said: "I don't want to bother you, but I want to say that I'm a lifelong Republican who thought I was a good conservative. But I didn't know what a lefty I must be until these people came into power. Who the hell are they?"

Nutballs, that's who. Way beyond the fringe. And if we don't do something come November 2, our nation will be off the deep end. ■

Bush & Co. have made the bizarre commonplace. So common that whenever there's another White House announcement of some action they've either taken or proposed, people instinctively cringe: "Oh no, here it comes again."

JIM HIGHTOWER
is the author of
*Let's Stop Beating
Around the Bush,*
available now
from Viking Press.



The Third Coast *By Salim Muwakkil*

The Best and Worst of Times

The street crime that captures so much media attention has many causes—high unemployment, under education, poor healthcare, inadequate housing—that are not quite as media friendly.

BARACK OBAMA WOWED THEM WITH HIS SPEECH during the Democratic National Convention. Not only is he likely to make history as only the third black U.S. senator elected since Reconstruction; pundits already are touting his presidential possibilities. With his probable electoral victory this November, Sen. Obama will join a number of African-American men who are making a real mark on American culture.

Obama's stage is politics. Black men are exerting their influence in every other nook and cranny of American life—cinema, athletics, media, medicine, theater. These are important milestones, but we can't let them obscure a more troubling assessment of black men's status.

It's an "emerging catastrophe," *New York Times*' columnist Bob Herbert wrote on July 19. And he's not alone in invoking such urgent language. Many experts are warning that black men are in the midst of a social crisis that Americans seem eager to ignore.

"Ignore" may be the wrong word. The media focus relentlessly on one aspect of this crisis: crime. But that focus is from the "if it bleeds, it leads," angle. The street crime that captures so much media attention is just the effect of a long list of causes. This crisis has many components—high unemployment, under education, poor healthcare, inadequate housing—that are not quite as media friendly.

Herbert's *Times* column highlighted a study by Andrew Sum, of Boston's Northeastern University, that found "by 2002, one of every four black men in the U.S. was idle all year long." And this unemployment rate of at least 25 percent did not include homeless men or those in jail or prison. "It is believed that up to 10 percent of the black male population under age 40 is incarcerated," Herbert writes.

That study had a national focus, but things are even worse in some urban centers. In Chicago, for example, the urgency of the situation prompted three Illinois Democrats—Reps. Danny K. Davis, Jesse L. Jackson Jr. and Bobby Rush—to convene a State of the African American Males Conference in June. In the press release announcing the success of the conference, organizers asked a number of questions:

"Why are more than 50 percent of African-American males between the ages of 16 and 22 out of work

and not in school? Why are 87 percent of juvenile parolees African-American males? Why are 60 percent of adult parolees African-American males? Why have only 38 percent of black males graduated from Chicago high schools since 1995, while 62 percent have dropped out?" Most of those numbers pertain to Illinois and Chicago, but also echo the stats of other urban centers.

Earlier this year, the Community Service Society of New York released a report, "A Crisis in Black Male Employment," that found only 51.8 percent of black men between the ages of 16 through 64 were employed from 2000 to 2003.

But issues of criminal justice are perhaps the most troublesome aspects of this crisis. According to Justice Department figures, 12.9 percent of black males ages 25-29 were in prison or jail; for white men in the same age group the number is 1.6 percent. These racially disparate incarceration rates influence public perception of black men and debilitate other aspects of black community life.

The corrections complex occupies too much space in African-American culture and long has exerted disproportionate influence on the lives of young black people. Long lists of statistics detail the depths of this crisis, but just one—the U.S. Justice Department projects that 32 percent of African-American men born in 2001 will spend time in prison—is enough to reveal its debilitating effects.

A flurry of research is unearthing the interlocking dimensions of this crisis. A study by Becky Pettit of the University of Washington and Bruce Western of Princeton University found that "fully 60 percent of African-American male high-school dropouts born between 1965 and 1969 had been incarcerated by the time they reached their early 30s." (See, "Prison in the Cards," Page 8)

Despite Obama's promise, conditions are worsening for far too many black men. Rep. Davis wrote President George W. Bush a letter urging him to establish a federal commission to analyze the dire plight of African-American males. "I urge you to take this step to bring national attention to a very serious problem and a great need," he wrote.

Davis supports Democrat John Kerry, who now has the national spotlight. Perhaps he should write Kerry a similar letter. ■



SALIM MUWAKKIL is a senior editor at *In These Times*, a contributing columnist to the *Chicago Tribune* and a *Crime and Communities Media Fellow* of the *Open Society Institute*.



Getting It Right

SMACKDOWN 2004!, THE FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION of the League of Independent Voters held mid-July in Columbus, Ohio, was a bootleg operation run entirely on cell phones, coffee and bad cafeteria food. The shuttle to and from the airport was a guy named Jeff in a Jeep. More than 300 people attended, so the overflow attendees were housed in a dormitory that reeked of fresh paint.

It worked brilliantly.

For a change, this was a progressive convention that started out with a plan. Unlike previous youth voter initiatives, the League is not looking to “appeal” to young voters—it is young voters who are mobilizing their own peers on their own terms. On hand were scores of activists who have accomplished electoral organizing with documented success and could entertain questions about organizational identity and post-election planning with flair. The League of Independent Voters is creating a youth voter bloc by tapping the power of existing feelings of disenfranchisement and frustration and showing activists routes into the political realm. It is instructing young activists in the old-fashioned tools of the campaign trade, combined with a Web-savvy sensibility and a concert-hopping, outside-the-club-registering twist.

Founded by William Upski Wimsatt, Kyle Stewart, Laura Livoti, James Bernard and Adrienne Maree Brown, the League published *How To Get Stupid White Men Out of Office* (see “Will Your State Be the Florida of 2004?,” July 5). The group also has offered grants to activists looking to get election-related projects off the ground. For their part, attendees arrived at the convention armed with ideas and ongoing projects. They included Sharif Corinaldi, who founded the Swing State Spring/Summer Break project that is placing student activists in key swing states on their school breaks, and Bike for Democracy—a nonpartisan group hoping to raise awareness during a cross-country, election-timed bicycle trip.

The convention was structured around the “90-day plan”—a concrete how-to of election-related organizing, complete with timeline, calendar and resource lists that every activist could take home and put into action. This was an inspired move—so many progressive forums are all ideas and case histories, and if you’re really lucky, someone’s handwritten notes on next steps. Organizers urged participants to retrofit the plan to fit their communities and local campaigns.

A team of crack programmers from San Francisco presented a soon-to-debut version of indyvoter.com.

This open-source, network-building Web site (à la Friendster) will allow convention attendees and activists to continue the exchange—launching a “local” that moves beyond geography.

In workshops that ran for the rest of the weekend, the League continued providing advice and tools activists could put to use. An hour-long session on fundraising had us writing budgets. “Tax Exempt Voter Organizing” was a headlong dive into the legalese of tax classifications. The “Media and Self-Documentation” session frankly addressed the complicated feelings of distrust many young activists have toward the media, but did so with such free-for-all humor that the girl next to me turned and said, “This is like stand-up comedy for lefties.”

The convention also smartly took up two questions that have bedeviled organizing: coalition building and burnout. The coalition-building session was led by seasoned activists who reminded us not just of the pitfalls, but of the strengths of a good coalition. And burnout came up in multiple sessions—we were warned that constantly burning the candle at both ends would leave us frustrated, unhappy and ineffective.

This is not to say that the convention went perfectly. Some sessions were disappointing, never taking off from the “What are your questions?” phase. One activist from southern Oregon expressed disappointment in the urban focus of both the 90-day plan and many of the campaign strategies. Others were left unsettled that conversations about race and gender within the League were never fully discussed or resolved.

But the strength of the League was embodied in the last session. Adrienne Maree Brown, a witty, grounded activist from Brooklyn and the emcee for most of the convention, led a discussion concerning post-election plans and the future of the League. This is the part of the convention to get excited about—young people talking about organizing beyond one election, taking up issues like discriminatory sentencing, healthcare and gay marriage. This final conversation considered the shelf life of political organizations, and the commitment needed to create a voting bloc of young voters that will continue to effect change.

The activists who attended this convention will not simply start their own chapters of the League. They will establish all types of projects, end up on boards, pop up on campaigns, and continue fighting the good fight.

Because when we left, it wasn’t just with the exhausted haze of a long weekend; it was with the giddy joy of people embarking on victory. ■

Unlike previous youth voter initiatives, the League is not looking to “appeal” to young voters—it is young voters.

PHOEBE CONNELLY, In These Times editorial assistant, is a member of the Youth Advisory Board of the League of Women Voters and is working on a voter education/registration project dubbed Voterama.

"Saddam is not in league with al Qaeda ... I have not seen any intelligence that would lead me to connect Saddam Hussein with al Qaeda."

Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.),
member of the Senate Foreign
Relations Committee, August 26, 2002

"[Saddam Hussein] has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction."

Colin Powell,
February 24, 2001

"We do not have any direct evidence that Iraq has used the period since Desert Fox to reconstitute its weapons of mass destruction programs."

CIA, February 2001

"We know [Iraq has] got ties with al Qaeda."

George W. Bush, November 1, 2002

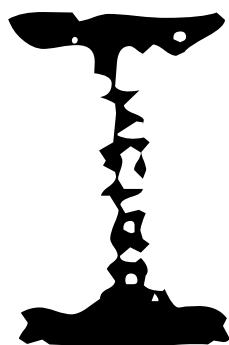
"The Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

George W. Bush, March 17, 2003

They Knew

By David Sirota and Christy Harvey

Despite the whitewash, we now know that the Bush administration was warned before the war that its Iraq claims were weak.



IF DESPERATION IS UGLY, THEN WASHINGTON, D.C. today is downright hideous.

As the 9/11 Commission recently reported, there was “no credible evidence” of a collaborative relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda. Similarly, no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq. With U.S. casualties mounting in an election year, the White House is grasping at straws to avoid being held accountable for its dishonesty.

The whitewash already has started: In July, Republicans on the Senate Intelligence Committee released a controversial report blaming

the CIA for the mess. The panel conveniently refuses to evaluate what the White House did with the information it was given or how the White House set up its own special team of Pentagon political appointees (called the Office of Special Plans) to circumvent well-established intelligence channels. And Vice President Dick Cheney continues to say without a shred of proof that there is “overwhelming evidence” justifying the administration’s pre-war charges.

But as author Flannery O’Conner noted, “Truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it.” That means no matter how much defensive spin spews from the White House, the Bush administration cannot escape the documented fact that it was clearly warned before the war that its rationale for invading Iraq was weak.

Top administration officials repeatedly ignored warnings that their assertions about Iraq’s supposed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and connections to al Qaeda were overstated. In some cases, they were told their claims were wholly without

merit, yet they went ahead and made them anyway. Even the Senate report admits that the White House “misrepresented” classified intelligence by eliminating references to contradictory assertions.

In short, they knew they were misleading America.

And they did not care.

They knew Iraq posed no nuclear threat

There is no doubt even though there was no proof of Iraq’s complicity, the White House was focused on Iraq within hours of the 9/11 attacks. As CBS News reported, “barely five hours after American Airlines Flight 77 plowed into the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld was telling his aides to come up with plans for striking Iraq.” Former Bush counterterrorism czar Richard Clarke recounted vividly how, just after the attack, President Bush pressured him to find an Iraqi connection. In many ways, this was no surprise—as former Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill and another ad-

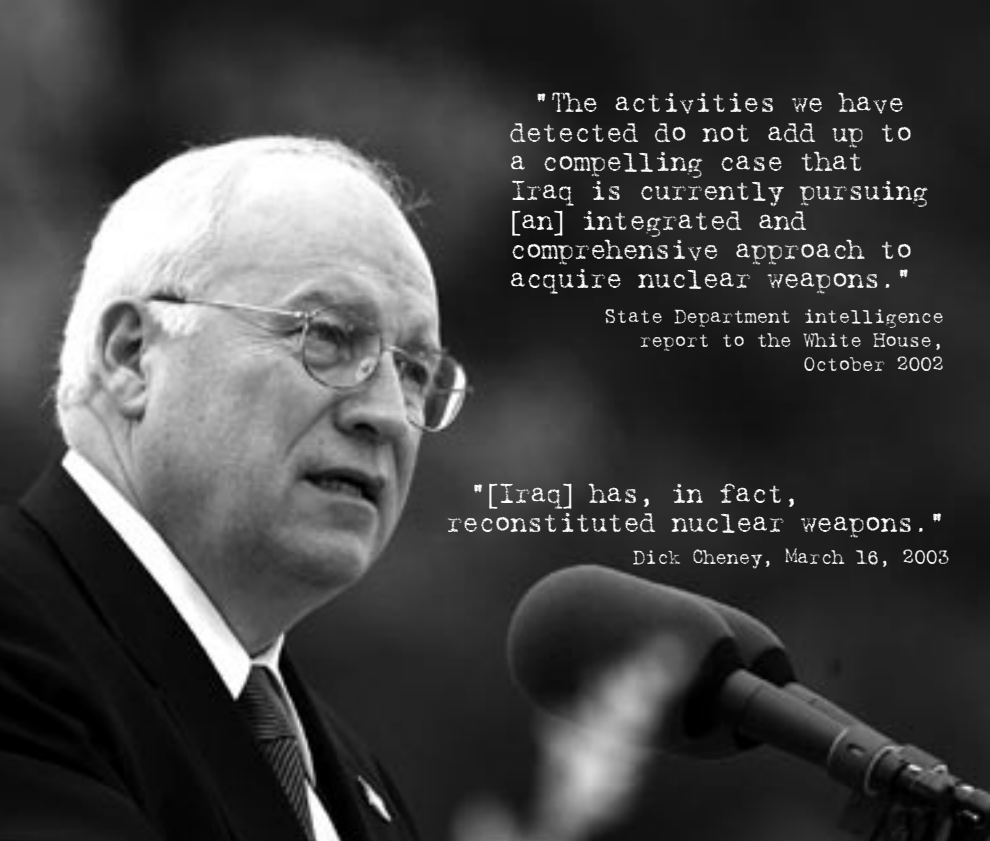
ministration official confirmed, the White House was actually looking for a way to invade Iraq well before the terrorist attacks.

But such an unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country required a public rationale. And so the Bush administration struck fear into the hearts of Americans about Saddam Hussein’s supposed WMD, starting with nuclear arms. In his first major address on the “Iraqi threat” in October 2002, President Bush invoked fiery images of mushroom clouds and mayhem, saying, “Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.”

Yet, before that speech, the White House had intelligence calling this assertion into question. A 1997 report by the U.N.’s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—the agency whose purpose is to prevent nuclear proliferation—stated there was no indication Iraq ever achieved nuclear capability or had any physical capacity for producing weapons-grade nuclear material in the near future.

In February 2001, the CIA delivered a report to the White House that said: “We do not have any direct evidence that Iraq has used the period since Desert Fox to reconstitute its weapons of mass destruction programs.” The report was so definitive that Secretary of State Colin Powell said in a subsequent press conference, Saddam Hussein “has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction.”

Ten months before the president’s speech, an intelligence review by CIA Director George Tenet contained not a single mention of a nuclear threat—or capability—from Iraq. The CIA was backed up by Bush’s own State Department: Around the time Bush gave his speech, the department’s intelligence bureau said that evidence did not



"The activities we have detected do not add up to a compelling case that Iraq is currently pursuing [an] integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons."

State Department intelligence report to the White House, October 2002

"[Iraq] has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons."

Dick Cheney, March 16, 2003

"add up to a compelling case that Iraq is currently pursuing what [we] consider to be an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquiring nuclear weapons."

Nonetheless, the administration continued to push forward. In March 2003, Cheney went on national television days before the war and claimed Iraq "has reconstituted nuclear weapons." He was echoed by State Department spokesman Richard Boucher, who told reporters of supposedly grave "concerns about Iraq's potential nuclear programs."

Even after the invasion, when troops failed to uncover any evidence of nuclear weapons, the White House refused to admit the truth. In July 2003, Condoleezza Rice told PBS's Gwen Ifill that the administration's nuclear assertions were "absolutely supportable." That same month, White House spokesman Scott McClellan insisted: "There's a lot of evidence showing that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program."

They knew the aluminum tubes were not for nuclear weapons

To back up claims that Iraq was actively trying to build nuclear weapons, the administration referred to Iraq's importation of aluminum tubes, which Bush officials said were for enriching uranium. In December 2002, Powell said, "Iraq has tried to obtain high-strength aluminum tubes which can be used to enrich uranium in centrifuges for a nuclear weapons program." Similar-

ly, in his 2003 State of the Union address, Bush said Iraq "has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production."

But, in October 2002, well before these and other administration officials made this claim, two key agencies told the White House exactly the opposite. The State Department affirmed reports from Energy Department experts who concluded those tubes were ill-suited for any kind of uranium enrichment. And according to memos released by the Senate Intelligence Committee, the State Department also warned Powell not to use the aluminum tubes hypothesis in the days before his February 2003 U.N. speech. He refused and used the aluminum tubes claim anyway.

The State Department's warnings were soon validated by the IAEA. In March 2003, the agency's director stated, "Iraq's efforts to import these aluminum tubes were not likely to be related" to nuclear weapons deployment.

Yet, this evidence did not stop the White House either. Pretending the administration never received any warnings at all, Rice claimed in July 2003 that "the consensus view" in the intelligence community was that the tubes "were suitable for use in centrifuges to spin material for nuclear weapons."

Today, experts agree the administration's aluminum tube claims were wholly without merit.

They knew the Iraq-uranium claims were not supported

In one of the most famous statements about Iraq's supposed nuclear arsenals, Bush said in his 2003 State of the Union address, "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." The careful phrasing of this statement highlights how dishonest it was. By attributing the claim to an allied government, the White House made a powerful charge yet protected itself against any consequences should it be proved false. In fact, the president invoked the British because his own intelligence experts had earlier warned the White House not to make the claim at all.

In the fall of 2002, the CIA told administration officials not to include this uranium assertion in presidential speeches. Specifically, the agency sent two memos to the White House and Tenet personally called top national security officials imploring them not to use the claim. While the warnings forced the White House to remove a uranium reference from an October 2002 presidential address, they did not stop the charge from being included in the 2003 State of the Union.

Not surprisingly, evidence soon emerged that forced the White House to admit the deception. In March 2003, IAEA Director Mohammed El Baradei said there was no proof Iraq had nuclear weapons and added "documents which formed the basis for [the White House's assertion] of recent uranium transactions between Iraq and Niger are in fact not authentic." But when Cheney was asked about this a week later, he said, "I think Mr. El Baradei frankly is wrong."

Bush and Rice both tried to blame the CIA for the failure, saying the assertion "was cleared by the intelligence services." When the intelligence agency produced the memos it had sent to the White House on the subject, Rice didn't miss a beat, telling *Meet The Press* "it is quite possible that I didn't" read the memos at all—as if they were "optional" reading for the nation's top national security official on the eve of war. At about this time, some high-level administration official or officials leaked to the press that Ambassador Joseph Wilson's wife was an undercover CIA agent—a move widely seen as an attempt by the administration to punish Wilson for his July 6, 2003 *New York Times* op-ed that stated he had found no evidence of an Iraqi effort to purchase uranium from Niger.

In recent weeks, right-wing pundits have pointed to new evidence showing the Iraq

uranium charge may have flirted with the truth at some point in the distant past. These White House hatchet men say the administration did not manipulate or cherry-pick intelligence. They also tout the recent British report (a.k.a. *The Butler Report*) as defending the president's uranium claim. Yet, if the White House did not cherry-pick or manipulate intelligence, why did the president trumpet U.S. intelligence from a foreign government while ignoring explicit warnings not to do so from his own? The record shows U.S. intelligence officials explicitly warned the White House that "the Brits have exaggerated this issue." Yet, the administration refused to listen. Even *The Butler Report* itself acknowledges the evidence is cloudy. As nonproliferation expert Joseph Cirincione of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace recently pointed out, "The claim appears shaky at best—hardly the stuff that should make up presidential decisions."

But now, instead of contrition, Republicans are insisting the White House's uranium charge was accurate. Indeed, these apologists have no option but to try to distract public attention from the simple truth that not a shred of solid evidence exists to substantiate this key charge that fueled the push for war.

They knew there was no hard evidence of chemical or biological weapons

In September 2002, President Bush said Iraq "could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as 45 minutes after the order is given." The next month, he delivered a major speech to "outline the Iraqi threat," just two days before a critical U.N. vote. In his address, he claimed without doubt that Iraq "possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons." He said that "Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons" and that the government was "concerned Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVs for missions targeting the United States."

What he did not say was that the White House had been explicitly warned that these assertions were unproved.

As the *Washington Post* later reported, Bush "ignored the fact that U.S. intelligence mistrusted the source" of the 45-minute claim and, therefore, omitted it from its intelligence estimates. And Bush ignored the fact that the Defense Intelligence Agency previously submitted a report to the administration finding "no reliable information" to prove Iraq was producing or stockpiling

chemical weapons. According to *Newsweek*, the conclusion was similar to the findings of a 1998 government commission on WMD chaired by Rumsfeld.

Bush also neglected to point out that in early October 2002, the administration's top military experts told the White House they "sharply disputed the notion that Iraq's Unmanned Aerial Vehicles were being designed as attack weapons." Specifically, the Air Force's National Air and Space Intelligence Center correctly showed the drones in question were too heavy to be used to deploy chemical/biological-weapons spray devices.

Regardless, the chemical/biological weapons claims from the administration continued to escalate. Powell told the United Nations on February 5, 2003, "There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more." As proof, he cited aerial images of a supposed decontamination vehicle circling a suspected weapons site.

According to newly released documents in the Senate Intelligence Committee report, Powell's own top intelligence experts told him not to make such claims about the photographs. They said the vehicles were likely water trucks. He ignored their warnings.

On March 6, 2003, just weeks before the invasion, the president went further than Powell. He claimed, "Iraqi operatives continue to hide biological and chemical agents."

To date, no chemical or biological weapons have been found in Iraq.

They knew Saddam and bin Laden were not collaborating

In the summer of 2002, *USA Today* reported White House lawyers had concluded that establishing an Iraq-al Qaeda link would provide the legal cover at the United Nations for the administration to attack Iraq. Such a connection, no doubt, also would provide political capital at home. And so, by the fall of 2002, the Iraq-al Qaeda drumbeat began.

It started on September 25, 2002, when Bush said, "you can't distinguish between al Qaeda and Saddam." This was news even to members of Bush's own political party who had access to classified intelligence. Just a month before, Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), who serves on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said, "Saddam is not in league with al Qaeda ... I have not seen any intelligence that would lead me to connect Saddam Hussein to al Qaeda."

To no surprise, the day after Bush's statement, *USA Today* reported several intelligence experts "expressed skepticism" about

the claim, with a Pentagon official calling the president's assertion an "exaggeration." No matter, Bush ignored these "concerns and that day described Saddam Hussein as "a man who loves to link up with al Qaeda." Meanwhile, Rumsfeld held a press conference trumpeting "bulletproof" evidence of a connection—a sentiment echoed by Rice and White House spokesman Ari Fleischer. And while the *New York Times* noted, "the officials offered no details to back up the assertions," Rumsfeld nonetheless insisted his claims were "accurate and not debatable."

Within days, the accusations became more than just "debatable"; they were debunked. German Defense Minister Peter Stuck said the day after Rumsfeld's press conference that his country "was not aware of any connection" between Iraq and al Qaeda's efforts to acquire chemical weapons. *The Orlando Sentinel* reported that terrorism expert Peter Bergen—one of the few to actually interview Osama bin Laden—said the connection between Iraq and al Qaeda are minimal. In October 2002, Knight Ridder reported, "a growing number of military officers, intelligence professionals and diplomats in [Bush's] own government privately have deep misgivings" about the Iraq-al Qaeda claims. The experts charged that administration hawks "exaggerated evidence." A senior U.S. official told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that intelligence analysts "contest the administration's suggestion of a major link between Iraq and al Qaeda."

While this evidence forced British Prime Minister Tony Blair and other allies to refrain from playing up an Iraq-al Qaeda connection, the Bush administration refused to be deterred by facts.

On November 1, 2002, President Bush claimed, "We know [Iraq has] got ties with al Qaeda." Four days later, Europe's top terrorism investigator Jean-Louis Bruguiere reported: "We have found no evidence of links between Iraq and al Qaeda. ... If there were such links, we would have found them. But we have found no serious connections whatsoever." British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, whose country was helping build the case for war, admitted, "What I'm asked is if I've seen any evidence of [Iraq-al Qaeda connections]. And the answer is: 'I haven't.'"

Soon, an avalanche of evidence appeared indicating the White House was deliberately misleading America. In January 2003, intelligence officials told the *Los Angeles Times* that they were "puzzled by the administration's new push" to create the perception of an Iraq-al Qaeda connection and said the intelligence community has "discounted—if not



"We have absolutely no indication of a link between Iraq and [al Qaeda]."

Michael Chandler, chairman of the U.N. Security Council's terrorism monitoring panel, December 18, 2002

"[Al Qaeda] clearly has had links to the Iraqis."

Condoleezza Rice, March 9, 2003

dismissed—information believed to point to possible links between Iraq and al Qaeda." One intelligence official said, "There isn't a factual basis" for the administration's conspiracy theory about the so-called connection.

On the morning of February 5, 2003, the same day Powell delivered his U.N. speech, British intelligence leaked a comprehensive report finding no substantial links between Iraq and al Qaeda. The BBC reported that British intelligence officials maintained "any fledgling relationship [between Iraq and al Qaeda] foundered due to mistrust and incompatible ideologies." Powell, nonetheless, stood before the United Nations and claimed there was a "sinister nexus between Iraq and the al Qaeda." A month later, Rice backed him up, saying al Qaeda "clearly has had links to the Iraqis." And in his March 17, 2003, speech on the eve of war, Bush justified the invasion by citing the fully discredited Iraq-al Qaeda link.

When the war commenced, the house of cards came down. In June 2003, the chairman of the U.N. group that monitors al Qaeda told reporters his team found no evidence linking the terrorist group to Iraq. In July 2003, the *Los Angeles Times* reported the bipartisan congressional report analyzing September 11 "undercut Bush administration claims before the war that Hussein had links to al Qaeda." Meanwhile, the *New York Times* reported, "Coalition forces have not brought to light any significant evidence demonstrating the bond between Iraq and al Qaeda." In August 2003, three former Bush administration officials came forward to admit pre-war evidence tying al Qaeda to Iraq "was tenuous, exaggerated, and often at odds with the

conclusions of key intelligence agencies."

Yet, the White House insisted on maintaining the deception. In the fall of 2003, President Bush said, "There's no question that Saddam Hussein had al Qaeda ties." And Cheney claimed Iraq "had an established relationship to al Qaeda." When the media finally began demanding proof for all the allegations, Powell offered a glimmer of contrition. In January 2004, he conceded that there was no "smoking gun" to prove the claim. His admission was soon followed by a March 2004 Knight Ridder report that quoted administration officials conceding "there never was any evidence that Hussein's secular police state and Osama bin Laden's Islamic terror network were in league."

But Powell's statement was the exception, not the norm. The White House still refuses to acknowledge wrongdoing, and instead resorts to the classic two-step feint, citing sources but conveniently refusing to acknowledge those sources' critical faults.

For instance, Cheney began pointing reporters to an article in the right-wing *Weekly Standard* as the "best source" of evidence backing the Saddam-al Qaeda claim, even though the Pentagon had previously discredited the story. Similarly, in June, the Republican's media spin machine came to the aid of the White House and promoted a *New York Times* article about a document showing failed efforts by bin Laden to work with Iraq in the mid-'90s against Saudi Arabia. Not surprisingly, the spinners did not mention the article's key finding—a Pentagon task force found that the document "described no formal alliance being reached between Mr. bin Laden and Iraqi intelligence."

When the 9/11 Commission found "no credible evidence" of a collaborative relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda, the White House denials came as no surprise. Cheney defiantly claimed there was "overwhelming evidence" of a link, provided no evidence, and then berated the media and the commission for having the nerve to report the obvious. Bush did not feel the need to justify his distortions, saying after the report came out, "The reason I keep insisting that there was a relationship between Iraq and Saddam and al Qaeda is because there was a relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda."

That was the perfect answer from an administration that never lets the factual record impinge on what it says to the American public.

They knew there was no Prague meeting

One of the key pillars of the Iraq-al Qaeda myth was a White House-backed story claiming 9/11 hijacker Mohammed Atta met with an Iraqi spy in April 2001. The tale originally came from a lone Czech informant who said he saw the terrorist in Prague at the time. White House hawks, eager to link al Qaeda with Saddam, did not wait to verify the story, and instead immediately used it to punch up arguments for a preemptive attack on Iraq. On November 14, 2001, Cheney claimed Atta was "in Prague in April of this year, as well as earlier." On December 9, 2001, he went further, claiming without proof that the Atta meeting was "pretty well confirmed."

Nine days later, the Czech government reported there was no evidence that Atta met with an Iraqi intelligence agent in Prague. Czech Police Chief Jiri Kolar said there were no documents showing Atta had been in Prague that entire year, and Czech officials told *Newsweek* that the uncorroborated witness who perpetuated the story should have been viewed with more skepticism.

By the spring of 2002, major news publications such as the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Newsweek* and *Time* were running stories calling the "Prague connection" an "embarrassing" mistake and stating that, according to European officials, the intelligence supporting the claim was "somewhere between 'slim' and 'none.'" The stories also quoted administration officials and CIA and FBI analysts saying that on closer scrutiny, "there was no evidence Atta left or returned to the United State at the time he was supposed to be in Prague."

Even FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III, a Bush political appointee, admitted in April 2002, "We ran down literally hundreds of thousands of leads and checked every record we could get our hands on, from flight reservations to car rentals to bank accounts," but found nothing.

But that was not good enough for the administration, which instead of letting the story go, began trying to manipulate intelligence to turn fantasy into reality. In August 2002, when FBI case officers told Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz that there was no Atta meeting, *Newsweek* reported Wolfowitz "vigorously challenged them." Wolfowitz wanted the FBI to endorse claims that Atta and the Iraqi spy had met. FBI counterterrorism chief Pat D'Amuro refused.

In September 2002, the CIA handed Cheney a classified intelligence assessment that cast specific, serious doubt on whether the Atta meeting ever occurred. Yet that same month, Richard Perle, then chairman of the Bush's Defense Policy Board, said, "Muhammad Atta met [a secret collaborator of Saddam Hussein] prior to September 11. We have proof of that, and we are sure he wasn't just there for a holiday." In the same breath, Perle openly admitted, "The meeting is one of the motives for an American attack on Iraq."

By the winter of 2002, even America's allies were telling the administration to relent: In November, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said he had seen no evidence of a meeting in Prague between Atta and an Iraqi intelligence agent.

But it did not stop. In September 2003, on "Meet the Press," Cheney dredged up the story again, saying, "With respect to 9/11, of course, we've had the story that's been public out there. The Czechs alleged that Mohammed Atta, the lead attacker, met in Prague with a senior Iraqi intelligence official five months before the attack." He provided no new evidence, opted not to mention that the Czechs long ago had withdrawn the allegations, and ignored new evidence that showed the story was likely untrue.

Even today, with all of the intelligence firmly against him, Cheney remains unrepentant. Asked in June about whether the meeting had occurred, he admitted, "That's never been proven." Then he added, "It's never been refuted." When CNBC's Gloria Borger asked about his initial claim that the meeting was "pretty well confirmed," Cheney snapped, "No, I never said that. I never said that. Absolutely not."

His actual words in December 2001: "It's

been pretty well confirmed that [Atta] did go to Prague and he did meet with a senior official of the Iraqi intelligence service."

In other words, Cheney hit a new low. He resorted not only to lying about the story, but lying about lying about the story.

Conclusion: They knew they were misleading America

In his March 17, 2003 address preparing America for the Iraq invasion, President Bush stated unequivocally that there was an Iraq-al Qaeda nexus and that there was "no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

In the context of what we now know the White House knew at the time, Bush was deliberately dishonest. The intelligence community repeatedly told the White House there were many deep cracks in its case for war. The president's willingness to ignore such warnings and make these unequivocal statements proves the administration was intentionally painting a black-and-white picture when it knew the facts merited only gray at best.

That has meant severe consequences for all Americans. Financially, U.S. taxpayers have shelled out more than \$166 billion for the Iraq war, and more will soon be needed. Geopolitically, our country is more isolated from allies than ever, with anti-Americanism on the rise throughout the globe.

And we are less secure. A recent U.S. Army War College report says "the invasion of Iraq was a diversion from the more narrow focus on defeating al Qaeda." U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi put it this way: "The war in Iraq was useless, it caused more problems than it solved, and it brought in terrorism."

These statements are borne out by the facts: The International Institute of Strategic Studies in London reports al Qaeda is now 18,000 strong, with many new recruits joining as a result of the war in Iraq. Not coincidentally, the White House recently said the American homeland faces an imminent threat of a terrorist attack from a still-active al Qaeda operation in Afghanistan. Yet, the administration actually moved special forces out of Afghanistan in 2002 to prepare for an invasion of Iraq. Because of this, we face the absurd situation whereby we have no more than 20,000 troops in Afghanistan hunting down those who directly threaten us, yet have 140,000 troops in Iraq—a country that was not a serious menace before invasion.

Of course, it is those troops who have it the worst. Our men and women in uniform are bogged down in a quagmire, forced to lay down life and limb for a lie.

To be sure, neoconservative pundits and Bush administration hawks will continue to blame anyone but the White House for these deceptions. They also will say intelligence gave a bit of credence to some of the pre-war claims, and that is certainly true.

But nothing can negate the clear proof that President Bush and other administration official officials vastly overstated the intelligence they were given. They engaged in a calculated and well-coordinated effort to turn a war of choice in Iraq into a perceived war of imminent necessity.

And we are all left paying the price. ■

DAVID SIROTA, who writes the "Truth & Consequences" column in *In These Times*, is director of strategic communications for the Center for American Progress. **CHRISTY HARVEY** is deputy director of strategic communications for the Center for American Progress.

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A new campaign launched by SEIU and UNITE HERE will target Sodexo workers, such as hospital cook Linda Owens.

COME TOGETHER RIGHT NOW

Labor unions reconfigure to battle huge multinationals

BY DAVID MOBERG

SINCE LAST FALL, ORGANIZED LABOR HAS urgently focused on defeating George Bush—described by AFL-CIO president John Sweeney as “the worst president we’ve had to deal with.” Even if Kerry should win, the labor movement faces a wrenching debate over its future starting the day after the election.

Despite Sweeney’s reform victory nearly a decade ago, the labor movement has made progress mainly in its political work, not in the crucial task of organizing in a globalized economy where many workers’ jobs are moved out of the country and U.S. workers increasingly face powerful multinational corporations.

The debate after the election will focus on what kinds of changes labor must make to expand its ranks and its power. One key group of labor leaders argues that, much as labor in the ’30s grew when new CIO unions organized according to industries rather than crafts, unions must now create structures to confront industries dominated by a few multinational corporations. To do this, unions must update their approach to organizing members, holding politicians accountable, recruiting public support, and creating the structures needed for solidarity and power.

The challenge was taken up this summer when two aggressive but small unions—UNITE (historically apparel and textile workers) and HERE (hotel and restaurant workers)—merged to form UNITE HERE.

“This merger is about dealing with globalization,” said John Wilhelm, former leader of HERE, who will effectively be a co-president with UNITE’s Bruce Raynor of the merged union.

UNITE has strong finances and talented staff, but a vanishing traditional industry. The apparel and textile unions that much earlier merged into UNITE represented 1 million workers 25 years ago, but UNITE entered the recent merger with only 190,000 workers. Yet UNITE has successfully organized many workers in recent years, including about 40,000 industrial laundry workers and those in apparel distribution and sales.

HERE, with about 250,000 workers, has great opportunities to organize hotels, casinos and food service providers—jobs that are hard to move out of the country. But it lacks resources—especially in the post-9/11 hospitality industry slump. In these domestically anchored industries, the union increasingly confronts not local owners, as in the past, but a small number of large multinational corporations with enormous power.

The merger doesn't create a union with one easily identifiable sector, but the merger makes sense because it matches resources and opportunities, and both unions have worked extensively with immigrants and workers of color—disproportionately women—in typically low-wage industries. The merger will succeed, Wilhelm argues, if the new union organizes more new members than the two would have separately.

While pledging support to its old apparel and textile base, UNITE HERE will downplay organizing workers exposed to the global market and instead “will organize the jobs that can't be exported,” Wilhelm says. It will attempt to make the low-wage jobs of the Wal-Martized service economy into solid middle-class jobs, much as unionization historically raised standards for poorly paid manufacturing workers.

Much as UNITE HERE leaders hope that their merger will set an example for other unions, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the largest and fastest growing union in the AFL-CIO, hopes to inspire other unions to focus on a few core industries and their dominant employers to build union power. SEIU, which will have 1.8 million members by the year's end, announced plans this summer to strengthen the union by going global, organizing in regions where it is weak (like the South), creating stronger industrial divisions, and building its community, political and local power. SEIU will launch a virtual, Internet-based arm of the union that opens membership—which SEIU President Andy Stern hopes will hit 1 million—to anyone who wants to support SEIU objectives. In collaboration with UNITE HERE and unions around the world, Stern announced an innovative campaign this summer to organize Sodexho, a French-owned multinational provider of outsourced food, janitorial and other services. Globally Sodexho and two other multinationals, Aramark and Compass, are the dominant “multi-service” corporations, employing 1.1 million workers.

But Stern, Raynor and Wilhelm also have set their sights on transforming the structure of the labor movement, including the AFL-CIO. SEIU and UNITE HERE, along with the Laborers and the Carpenters (which left the AFL-CIO in 2001), linked up last year as the New Unity Partnership (NUP) to support each other in organizing and to promote change in the labor movement. They contend that the 60 unions now in the AFL-CIO should consolidate into 15 to 20 large unions focused on broadly defined industries, unlike the loose federation it currently is, to organize campaigns at major employers on a much grander, even global scale. These NUP leaders emphasize that they are determined to take “the leading role to lead labor out of this wilderness” of recent years, Raynor says. Stern says bluntly, “We need to transform the AFL-CIO or build something new.”

The problem with the AFL-CIO is its structure, not president Sweeney, Stern says, and both Raynor and Wilhelm praised Sweeney for his efforts. Sweeney in turn praised the value of their challenges and dissent and echoed many of their complaints about other unions. While it is still possible that someone, perhaps Wilhelm or Laborers president Terry O'Sullivan could challenge Sweeney for reelection next year, there are signs that NUP leaders could support Sweeney if he is willing to push hard for reforms, such as enforceable rules on mergers and organizing, many of which he has long advocated.

At next year's AFL-CIO convention, Stern says he will propose giving the AFL-CIO more authority to “stop bad mergers,” to prevent unions from organizing in areas where other unions have started campaigns or have organized extensively, and to prohibit unions from undercutting each other with substandard contracts. There also must be meaningful penalties for unions that violate such rules, Stern says.

“I would hope [Sweeney] would lead, but that's a decision he would have to make,” Stern says. “The question is, ‘What does the AFL-CIO

SEIU will launch a virtual, Internet-based arm of the union that opens membership—which SEIU President Andy Stern hopes will hit 1 million—to anyone who wants to support SEIU objectives.

believe in enough to fight for?’ This is not a time of consensus. It's a time for leadership.” It's also a time, Stern says, to involve union members, not just top leaders, in a debate about the future of the labor movement. If Sweeney or someone else can't forge a stronger AFL-CIO, the NUP leaders hint that they could turn to other structures. “We are a divided labor movement that talks about unity,” Stern says. “At some point people will do what's best for their members.” That may start with defeating Bush, but that's only a start. ■

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En Masse & On Message

Boston becomes a progressive tea party.

BY CHRISTOPHER HAYES

ON ITS SURFACE, THE 2004 DEMOCRATIC National Convention was pretty, well, conventional.

There were the usual delegate breakfasts with self-congratulatory pols and party hacks. There were canned speeches, hotel-lobby schmoozing, celebrity spotting, elevator flirtations between interns and fierce competition for tickets to the hottest parties.

But I soon realized that the real action of the Democratic National Convention wasn't to be found inside the Fleet Center or in the marble lobby of the Sheraton. It was found in a series of events around Boston—from Kucinich rallies to Campaign for America's Future forums, to the Progressive Democrats of America Convention—in which progressives gathered to consecrate and build a political movement that will both elect John Kerry this fall and create the institutional underpinnings for a broad progressive mandate. And if that energy and grassroots

innovation wasn't at the center of the party itself, the writing on the wall is clear: It's coming.

"This is the most exciting convention I've ever been to in my life," Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) told the crowd at the Progressive Democrats of America conference. "Why? The progressive movement is now gaining a foothold. Dennis Kucinich is a leader in the Democratic Party!"

The desire to defeat Bush has been so strong that progressives, many of whom felt alienated from the party that for the last decade has used them mostly as a foil for triangulation, are now infiltrating its core in hopes of changing its course. "We both *are* the party," Kucinich likes to tell his delegates "and are becoming the party."

Thanks in no small part to Kucinich, who created a home for those with Nader's politics beneath the Democrats' tent, progressives have moved from protest pens outside the convention center to progressive forums in conference rooms and churches, and in some cases onto the convention floor itself.

Unified but not uniform

Consider Jessica Beckett, a 19-year-old with dreadlocks and a lip ring. She bears more than a passing resemblance to Ani DiFranco, and wearing a long skirt and sandals fits the protester stereotype. But she speaks with the turn of phrase and easy smile of a politician, “The Democratic party needs to be unified,” she says, “but not uniform.”

She came to Boston from her hometown of Poulsbo, Washington, as a Kucinich delegate because a friend’s mother persuaded her to do something totally weird: attend her local, precinct caucus in Washington state. “Honestly, I didn’t know how the system worked, I didn’t know you graduated up as delegates, the whole shebang. But I did debate in high school and I know Roberts’ Rules of Orders and all that crap so I can fake it pretty well.”

Beckett is something of a democracy nerd. She describes in minute detail the ins and outs of the party caucus process with evident glee, recounting how she persuaded delegates to listen to Kucinich’s message and got herself elected up from the precinct level to the state delegation. Next time she’ll be sure to not just bring herself to the caucus. “Anybody can do it,” she says, “anyone. If any of my friends had shown up at that caucus, it would have been even better. There would have been more representation here today. And it’s like ‘Wow. That is how it works.’ All you have to do is show up and say ‘I’ve got a goddamn opinion.’”

Beckett’s politics are thoroughly left—she decries the racist, classist drug war and death penalty, she wants the United States to pull out of the WTO, she passionately favors universal healthcare. But she’s also deeply pragmatic. “You don’t necessarily always agree with everyone, but you learn to work with people,” she says. “That’s the way politics are.”

She was just one of dozens of similar activists in Boston who channeled energies into the most fundamental forms of political organizing. Sarah, a 21-year-old self-identified progressive from Michigan, organized fellow students at Michigan State to knock on all 14,000 doors on campus three times to get people to vote for Dean in the primary. Now she’s a delegate, and back home she’s working on her congresswoman’s campaign. “John Kerry’s a good nominee and he’ll make a good president,” she says, “until we can put a real progressive in the White House.”

Paul Kroska and Deb Gibbons came from the small town of Ely, Minnesota, where they had campaigned for Kucinich at their county caucus. Gibbons says she’s “always

been a Democrat,” while Kroska came into the party more recently. Both say the Kucinich campaign inspired them to get active in a way they never had been before. “We did a poll in which we contacted all the voters in Ely, Minnesota,” says Gibbons, “which isn’t a huge big deal, somewhere around 2,000 people. That’s called grassroots.” They showed up at their local, county and state caucus and managed to get an endorsement of a cabinet-level Department of Peace plank in the Minnesota state Democrat-Farmer-Labor Party platform. They weren’t the only ones—this year eight states, including Texas, have such planks.

An infrastructure emerges

Grassroots activism like this isn’t isolated to a few small cases or a handful of passionate people. It is a genuine phenomenon, giving birth to and receiving support from a cadre of emerging institutions, such as the Campaign for America’s Future, Progressive Majority, and Progressive Democrats of America.

“The exciting thing about this election is that we are building independent progressive institutions, independent progressive organizations, independent progressive leadership that is driving this debate against George Bush,” Campaign for America’s Future’s co-director Robert Borosage told a packed crowd at an event at the Radisson in Cambridge. The forum, called Take Back America, was so crowded that hundreds of people were forced to wait outside for the speakers to come and give repeat performances on a hotel balcony.

Borosage was followed by Howard Dean, who in sharp contrast to his lackluster convention speech was in top form. “The way Republicans beat us,” he told the crowd, “is 30 years ago they started to make sure that somebody ran for the school board and somebody ran for the county commissioner and somebody ran for every office you could think of right on up to president of the United States, and we didn’t do that.”

Dean is part of an effort, along with Campaign for America’s Future and Progressive Majority, to recruit candidates for local office. Already they are supporting hundreds of candidates nationwide with training, information and technical consulting. Progressive Majority is focused on House and Senate races, but the group’s founder, Gloria Totten, said they intend to recruit and support a “farm team” of local candidates who will grow into the next generation of party leaders. “We’re taking progressives and trying to teach them how to be good candi-

dates,” she said, “rather than taking career politicians and trying to turn them into good progressives.”

Dean echoed that sentiment. “Voting is the bare minimum for sustaining democracy; I want you to run for office. ... We have 800 local candidates running around the country. One guy’s running for library trustee. ... The way you win the presidential elections is to make sure you take care of the local elections.”

Proud to be progressive

Unlike the now-taboo “liberal,” “progressive” seems to be a label that even politicians are proud to embrace. It seemed, in fact, as if at the convention “Progressive” was emerging as more than a label, but as a real political identity, the way “Movement Conservative” has for the Right.

For all the talk about representation, however, these progressive events were shockingly, disconcertingly white. “The convention looks more diverse than this room,” Boston community organizer Marianna White-Hammond told the crowd at the Progressive Democrats of America convention. “How are we going to tell the Democrats they need to be like us when they are more diverse than we are?”

Just what this “progressive” label means isn’t always clear. To be sure, all the folks at the events around the convention, from Take Back America forums, to Kucinich rallies, to the Progressive Democrats of America conference, don’t agree on every issue.

Nevertheless, there is a consistency to the rhetoric and fundamental principles of these new progressives that is striking. “What’s happening is that there’s a lot a little branches of different people,” says Paul Kroska, “but we all want the same thing. You know there’s Deaniacs, there’s Kucitizens, there’s Kerry people, but it’s all the progressive movement and it’s growing rapidly.”

Messages coalesce

It’s long been a cliché that the Left has no message discipline: An antiwar protest becomes a platform to talk about everything from endangered seals to Leonard Peltier. But that kind of scattershot approach was almost nowhere in evidence in Boston. Kucinich supporters wore T-shirts with single sentence platform planks: Repeal the Patriot Act, End the War in Iraq, Establish a Department of Peace, Institute Single-Payer Universal Healthcare. The Campaign for America’s Future gave out a brochure with a succinct platform high-

Continued on page 30

Convention

Continued from page 25

lighting the progressive choices of "Corporate License vs. Worker Empowerment," "Board Room vs. Kitchen Table Economics" and "Imperial Isolation vs. Collective Security."

Progressives have formulated a worldview and begun to build an actual message, refining their talking points and even developing their own slogan, which I first heard from Jessica Beckett when I asked her to describe her politics. She said didn't like the old distinctions of Left and Right and preferred a "Politics of hope vs. a politics of fear." It was the same phrase I'd see later that day on the cover of Campaign for America's Future's platform brochure and hear dozens of times from different progressives throughout the week.

Dean often says that progressives have to take their case to states like Oklahoma and Utah and Alabama. And talking to many of the activists, organizers and delegates at the event, I heard time and again the view that progressive values aren't a badge of distinction separating the enlightened few from the clueless many. Rather, they are fundamentally

commonsense and popular if properly communicated. "How many people really want war? Probably none," says Gibson. "That's a progressive thought today. Everybody needs healthcare, that's another one."

This common-sense progressive message already is bubbling up from the grassroots to party leaders. In his address John Edwards spoke of "kitchen table" economics, the "politics of hope" and vowed, "We're going to say no forever to any American working full-time and living in poverty."

Beyond Red and Blue

Perhaps the greatest potential messenger of this progressive message is the politician everyone in Boston was talking about: Senate candidate Barack Obama from Illinois. Commentators hailed Obama's stirring Tuesday night speech as a Clintonian reach toward the middle, but that is untrue. Though Obama resists labels, he has been a true progressive as state senator, receiving the endorsement of nearly every progressive organization in the state and support from Progressive Majority. He's worked for expanding children's healthcare and criminal justice reform, and as a little-known Senate candidate he spoke against the impending Iraq war at a peace

rally in downtown Chicago.

Obama's stump speech, part of which made its way into Tuesday night's speech, is an eloquent and compelling articulation of progressive values.

If there's a child on the South Side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to me, even if it's not my child. If there's a senior citizen somewhere who can't pay for her prescription and has to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer, even if it's not my grandmother. If there's an Arab-American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties. It's that fundamental belief—I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper—that makes this country work.

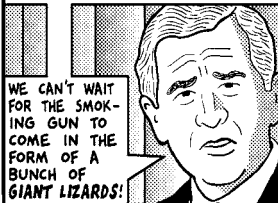
The roar of the crowd in the Fleet center drowned out Obama's final words, the message that we are bound by a set of moral obligations. This is the bedrock of progressivism, and it's a message that any candidate, from a guy running for library supervisor to someone running for president of the United States, can take to any state, Blue or Red. ■

THIS MODERN WORLD

OUR STORY SO FAR

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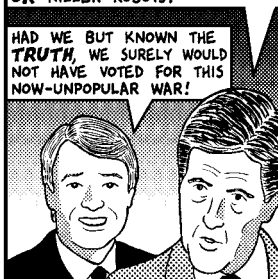
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by TOM TOMORROW



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—Randolph Bourne, “The State”

BY DAVID MULCAHEY

Another World, Possibly

Shortly before he died in 1918, the American critic Randolph Bourne penned an incendiary essay laying bare the monstrous duplicity at the heart of Woodrow Wilson’s foreign policy. We know Wilson from school history as the champion of national

self-determination. Bourne regarded such high-minded talk as a hollow ruse. History will record, he wrote, that “when the American nation had ostensibly a chance to conduct a gallant war, with scrupulous regard to the safety of democratic values at home, it chose rather to adopt all the most obnoxious and coercive techniques of the enemy and of the other countries at war, and to rival in intimidation and ferocity of punishment the worst governmental systems of the age.”

The essay, which Bourne never finished, is remembered for a pithy aphorism, “War is the health of the state.” This slogan has lately taken on a discomfiting resonance.

Warfare, Bourne observed, exercised a psychological effect on the nation wholly salutary to the state and the classes that ran it. It regimented life and terrorized dissenters, granting the state new powers to punish citizens for the mildest divergences from orthodoxy. Wilson’s lofty rhetoric about a world made safe for democracy

was merely filigree on his dangerous idealism of the state. Inevitably, the democratic principles he so fervently boosted came into conflict with the state’s need for power. Just as inevitably, Bourne wrote, Wilson decided “that it is the naïver democratic values that must be sacrificed.”

Bourne’s manifesto is remarkably apposite today. It’s certainly a great source to plunder for antiwar rhetoric. Yet what the left needs to grasp is how profoundly the nature of warfare has evolved, especially in the last few decades—to understand the way these innovations have arisen in response to novel challenges to state power. In their new book, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri try to get a grip of this dynamic. The result is rich and sometimes surprising, and it marks a fruitful new direction.

Hardt and Negri are the authors of *Empire*, the 2001 bestseller that outlined a new supranational political network—*Empire*—that the authors believe inexora-

bly supersedes nation states as the agent of global power.

Multitude attempts to make sense of the interval since their last book. After all, the Bush administration's assertive foreign policy may strike some as problematic to *Empire's* conceit. The book also tackles a related problem: Who in the age of Empire will be the standard-bearer of leftist political struggle and aspiration?

As for the Bush administration's healthy regard for war, Hardt and Negri offer a subtle and, in many ways, counterintuitive interpretation. Whereas the more bombastic critics of the Iraq war like to point out the possible pecuniary angles the president and his cronies are working, Hardt and Negri demur that, really, this war is bad for business. The disproportionate force the American military enjoys turns out to be not such a great advantage. Mercenary armies fighting indigenous resistance movements don't have a great win-

other by the tens of thousands in trench combat. Postmodern wars are clean, technologically delimited, humanitarian. Right?

But they are *total* wars in ways the great gore fests of the 20th Century were not. War, Hardt and Negri write, is no longer concerned merely with conventional strategic objectives but with "producing and reproducing all aspects of social life." What is the "war on drugs," for example, with its concept of zero tolerance, other than a bid for social control? What is the "war on terrorism," with its embedded technologies of surveillance, other than a means to discipline civil society?

Hardt and Negri argue the limits of war have been extended. No more of that liberal-modernist hoo-hah about war as the means of last resort. War is now "the first and primary element, the foundation of politics itself." The roster of acceptable enemies has been expanded from rival nations and political parties to include "abstract concepts and sets of practices." Not surprisingly, then, the apologetics of war have taken on moralistic cadences, with "just war" theory and "evil" crowding out "national interest."

In fact, as Hardt and Negri see it, postmodern war really is civil war, a war against dangerous internal enemies of Empire itself. The U.S. armed forces, as the media breathlessly reported, have undergone a "revolution in military affairs," or RMA. The new army is no longer massed ranks of cannon fodder, but a decentralized network of highly trained and well-equipped knowledge-workers. They kill and conquer, to be sure, but afterward they "dictate cultural and legal norms to the conquered." They are nation builders.

But the RMA should not be mistaken for some consequence of enlightenment or humane values, Hardt and Negri write. It grew out of the counterinsur-

gency operations of the late 20th Century, and its sole purpose is to serve Empire. Since well before 9/11, U.S. military planners have understood that their enemy is a network, that war is now "netwar." They have adapted to their enemy.

Who is this enemy? "His name," Hardt and Negri write, riffing on a passage from the New Testament, "is legion." Leaving aside the better-known "evildoers," the authors suggest the banner of resistance to Empire will be carried by "the Multitude," a heterogeneous and heterodox force who share with the global poor a "double character of poverty and possibility." They are flexible, mobile and resourceful—think the Zapatistas, the Seattle demonstrators, or even the Palestinian Intifada in its more grassroots manifestations.

Interestingly, this flexible nature we observe in both the RMA and the more effective global insurgencies corresponds to changes in civilian labor markets. Hardt and Negri argue that a new kind of work,

"immaterial" labor, has come to the fore socially and culturally. Any number of terms have already been coined to describe postindustrial labor, and the authors' own elaborations on the phenomenon are passably interesting. What is crucial, though, is their observation that immaterial workers produce more than goods and services—they produce "cooperation, communication, forms of life and social relationships." These immaterial things have "value," Hardt and Negri argue, as much as Marx's commodities do, and as such are a source of political power.

How to assert this power? Hardt and Negri refuse to urge "What is to be done?" Their objective, prudently, is to suggest that social revolution is still eminently possible, and that even in this dark time the left has every reason to be optimistic.

Another world is possible, they argue. Power rests with the people. All that is needed is a political project to make it happen. ■

Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire

By Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri
Penguin
448 pages, \$27.95

loss record. From a pragmatic point of view, the war will likely prove to be a serious mistake.

That is not to say that war, according to Hardt and Negri, is less crucial to the health of the state in our time than it was in Bourne's. War today is different and, the authors argue, the way in which it has changed is key. Comparing the last century to our own time we may be fooled into believing that humankind has learned from modernity's carnage. Sure, the earth may abound in weapons of mass destruction, but we are enlightened enough not to use them. And we don't slaughter each

ART SPACE



An illustration by Sue Coe featured in *Bully! Master of the Global Merry-Go-Round*, a new book by Coe with Judith Brody, published by Four Walls Eight Windows. Another subtitle (found elsewhere in a reference to the book, though not in the book itself) is *A Pre-Election Examination of the Bush Administration*. The text above the whip reads: "Uncle Bully cracks a mean whip, but don't think the oxen are the only ones to feel it."



BOOKS

COURTESY GLOBAL EXCHANGE

BY FRIDA BERRIGAN

Seeking True Security

In January, my sister was arrested for hanging a banner off Los Angeles' Transamerica building depicting a gas nozzle gun held to Lady Liberty's head with the slogan "Ford: Holding America Hostage To Oil."

My sister's direct action might seem extreme, but as Matthew Yeomans's *Oil: Anatomy of an Industry* makes clear, such stark confrontations with how oil affects our lives are long overdue. America is the world's largest oil consumer and *Oil* amply demonstrates that our dependence on this nonrenewable resource is a threat to economic, geopolitical and environmental security.

Yeomans' slim volume is a volatile mix of history, politics, economics, science, and foreign and military policy. It is a story of strength: How the world's sole superpower generates, uses and controls power. Yeomans begins with a good old-fashioned object lesson, trying to live a day without oil. But he soon realizes that he cannot leave his house—the city's streets and his shoes are made from petroleum products;

Oil: Anatomy of an Industry
By Matthew Yeomans
New Press
\$22.95, 246 pages

and even if he could leave, he wouldn't be able to see—both his glasses and contact lenses are petroleum-based.

The lesson learned, Yeomans uses the rest of *Oil* to trace the environmental, economic and security consequences of oil addiction. He notes that the United States uses one-fourth of the world's oil, producing 8 million barrels a day and importing another 12 million. Meanwhile, our domestic production capacity is waning; U.S. oil fields are 25 percent less productive than 20 years ago. Even so, the United States has more cars than drivers, and new vehicles rolling off

the assembly line are less fuel-efficient than past models.

The "Energy Wars" chapter is timely and telling. Since Winston Churchill's oil-powered battleships turned the tide of WWI, the fate of great powers has rested on their ability to control access to oil. The paradigm is: oil access = a strong military = security = oil access. Yeomans covers familiar ground in describing this dynamic in the post-9/11 context: the pipeline politicking in Afghanistan and the Caspian; Saddam Hussein as a former client of the United States; Iraq as the Holy Grail of oil riches; Cheney's ride in the revolving door between the defense industry and the White House; the neocons' role in crafting policy, and Africa as the new oil boom town. But he covers it well. Morsels of insight and analysis, like his analysis of

the war against Iraq as an effort to undermine OPEC, make the book more than just a simple overview.

Iraq, in the words of Paul Wolfowitz, "floats on a sea of oil"—112 billion barrels at least. But how much oil does it take to ensure U.S. control of that motherlode? The U.S. military used an estimated 45 million barrels in the 1991 invasion of Iraq. No figures for the 2003 war have yet to be formulated, but the Rocky Mountain Institute estimates that in the first 3 months the air war alone consumed 1.5 million barrels of jet fuel.

This is a drop in Iraq's bucket, but the fact that the Defense Department is the United States' single largest consumer of energy should create opportunities to break Churchill's paradigm. The U.S. military expends most of its fuel moving fuel. For example, 70 percent of the tonnage transported in Army deployments is fuel for military hardware like the Abrams tank, the workhorse of the occupation, which gets about .2 miles to the gallon.

To challenge our oil dependence, we will have to do more than choose Hybrid over Hummer. We have to dismantle this deadly paradox—that the U.S. military is the largest consumer of oil as it tries to secure U.S. access to oil—and begin to develop a new paradigm that asserts national security's independence from oil, and that global security involves the development of renewable energy for the good of the environment and the economy.

If our country remains the occupying force in Iraq and continues its current course of the global War on Terrorism, we will remain an oil-dependent nation caught in a cycle of "wars of blood for oil" that waste both, and ultimately gain nothing. ■

FRIDA BERRIGAN is a senior research associate with the Arms Trade Resource Center, a project of the World Policy Institute.

BY DON THRASHER

Citizen Punk

While there is a history of political discourse in punk rock music dating back to the mid '70s, much of it has been exercised through protest songs, political statements in publications and benefit concerts rather

than involvement with actual political groups. Veteran punk rocker Jesse Townley, singer for Bay Area band The Frisk, is putting his beliefs into action by running as the Green Party candidate in the November 2 election for Berkeley City Council District 5. This isn't some snot-nosed prank or PR stunt but a serious campaign by an active member of Berkeley's nonprofit community.

Born in New Jersey in 1970, Townley was raised in nearby Philadelphia, where he attended a Quaker high school. He moved to Berkeley when he was 19 and quickly became involved with the vibrant punk scene that spawned such acts as Operation Ivy and Green Day. Townley, who performs under the alias Jesse Luscious, has been in such bands as Blatz, The Gr'ups and most notably The Criminals, which he fronted throughout the '90s. But he has always devoted his time to other projects such as the City of Berkeley's Disaster Council, the American Civil Liberties Union, Berkeley Citizens Action and the Sign and Display Workers Union Local 510.

In 1991, Townley became secretary at 924 Gilman Street, the legendary cooperatively run venue where hundreds of Bay Area punk bands got their

start. He still holds the post 13 years later, handling such duties as facilitating meetings and helping oversee the budget of the alcohol-free, all-ages performance space. Working at Gilman provided him with experience doing nonprofit work, handling business matters, adhering to community standards and dealing with business leaders and various departments in the local government.

"Initially there were different parts of the city that had different impressions and opinions on Gilman," Townley says. "The ones that were completely off base were the ones that really planted the seed for me getting much more involved with local politics because there was clearly a gap of understanding. Working at Gilman certainly had its share of responsibility—but being an all-ages, volunteer-run collective, we basically taught ourselves to deal with responsibility."

"Some nights we counted thousands of dollars and we had to figure out who gets what money and make sure everything is fair and as egalitarian as possible," Townley adds.



"Somebody has to show up and unlock the door, somebody has to stay after the show and clean up the neighborhood. That's the crazy training we do and I don't think some parts of the city understood the value we were adding to the community on top of all the art, creativity and expression we were fostering."

Townley has been a licensed Emergency Medical Technician and is a specialist in disability services. He worked

for several years at Easy Does It, an agency contracted by the City of Berkeley to provide emergency services to disabled residents living independently. He was executive director of the agency from 2000 to 2002 and served on the board of directors through 2003.

Townley's disparate experiences figure heavily into his grassroots campaign. His key issues include development that serves the entire community rather than simply the privileged and powerful and continuing Berkeley's ecological leadership by using government resources for

such pro-Green issues as energy efficiency, expansion of Biodiesel vehicles, solarization and energy efficient public transit. Townley is big on public safety with particular interest in disaster preparedness, neighborhood training in Community Emergency Response Team training and continuation of the city's successful community policing and bicycle police programs.

"I think it's important for people outside of the musical community I come from to recognize that the social activism and very strong grassroots feeling of this music

is completely analogous to what happened in '67, '68 and '69," Townley says. "Different music, different hairstyles for sure but there is something rotten in our country and it is paramount we band together to fix it. You still have people in both parties who are beholden to money and they need to be called accountable." ■

DON THRASHER writes on music for *In These Times*.

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I Love You, Madame Librarian

By Kurt Vonnegut

LIKE PROBABLY MOST of you, have seen Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Its title is a parody of the title of Ray Bradbury's great science fiction novel, *Fahrenheit 451*. This temperature 451° Fahrenheit, is the combustion point, incidentally, of paper, of which books are composed. The hero of Bradbury's novel is a municipal worker whose job is burning books.

And on the subject of burning books: I want to congratulate librarians, not famous for their physical strength or their powerful political connections or their great wealth, who, all over this country, have staunchly resisted anti-demo-

cratic bullies who have tried to remove certain books from their shelves, and have refused to reveal to thought police the names of persons who have checked out those titles.

So the America I loved still exists, if not in the White House or the Supreme Court or the Senate or the House of Representatives or the media. The America I love still exists at the front desks of our public libraries.

And still on the subject of books: Our daily sources of news, papers and TV, are now so craven, so unvigilant on behalf of the American people, so uninformative, that only in books can we find out what is really going on. I will cite an example: *House of Bush*, *House of Saud* by

Craig Unger, published near the start of this humiliating, shameful blood-soaked year.

In case you haven't noticed, and as a result of a shamelessly rigged election in Florida, in which thousands of African Americans were arbitrarily disenfranchised, we now present ourselves to the rest of the world as proud, grinning, jut-jawed, pitiless war lovers, with appallingly powerful weaponry and unopposed.

In case you haven't noticed, we are now almost as feared and hated all over the world as the Nazis were.

With good reason.

In case you haven't noticed, our unelected leaders have dehumanized millions and millions

of human beings simply because of their religion and race. We wound and kill 'em and torture 'em and imprison 'em all we want.

Piece of cake.

In case you haven't noticed, we also dehumanize our own soldiers, not because of their religion or race, but because of their low social class.

Send 'em anywhere. Make 'em do anything.

Piece of cake.

The O'Reilly Factor.

So I am a man without a country, except for the librarians and the Chicago-based magazine you are reading, *In These Times*.

Before we attacked Iraq, the majestic *New York Times* guaranteed that there were weapons of mass destruction there.

Albert Einstein and Mark Twain gave up on the human race at the end of their lives, even though Twain hadn't even seen World War I. War is now a form of TV entertainment. And what made WWI so particularly entertaining were two American inventions, barbed wire and the machine gun. Shrapnel was invented by an Englishman of the same name. Don't you wish you could have something named after you?

Like my distinct betters Einstein and Twain, I now am tempted to give up on people too. And, as some of you may know, this is not the first time I have surrendered to a pitiless war machine.

My last words? "Life is no way to treat an animal, not even a mouse."

Napalm came from Harvard. *Veritas!*

Our president is a Christian? So was Adolf Hitler.

What can be said to our young people, now that psychopathic personalities, which is to say persons without consciences, without a sense of pity or shame, have taken all the money in the treasuries of our government and corporations and made it all their own? ■